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XPERIA



The new **Xperia™ Z Ultra** from Sony has a Full HD TRILUMINOS™ Display for mobile, made for thrilling entertainment. And it's "waterproof", ultra-slim and lightweight so you can enjoy it anywhere.

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SLIM.
TOUGH.**

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ENDLESS BIG ENTERTAINMENT

When the best can only get better

XPERIA



There is a never-ending stream of innovations by Sony. After introducing a great smartphone and an incredible tablet, what more can the company offer? Let's go right to the middle of the action as the Sony Xperia™ Z Ultra surfaces. Crafted with the latest Sony technology and design in mind, everything about it is ultra-refined.

ULTRA SIZE

Time for entertainment on a bigger screen. Built with refined Sony Bravia technology, this is the world's largest Full HD Android smartphone* as it measures in at 6.4in. Even better, the Sony Xperia™ Z Ultra is the first smartphone ever to incorporate a TRILUMINOS™ Display with X-Reality onto a mobile device. Imagine staring into a display that gives you a wider palette with rich natural colours. Knowing users want more, Sony even allows touchscreen inputs from any sort of pen-like stylus because of the highly responsive screen. Pens? Pencils? Use all of it!

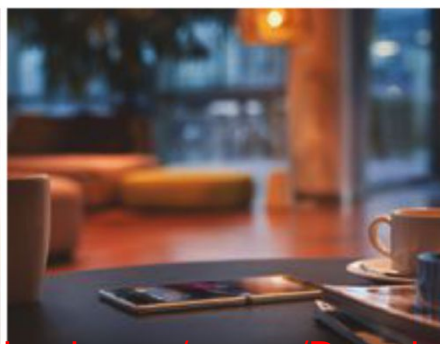
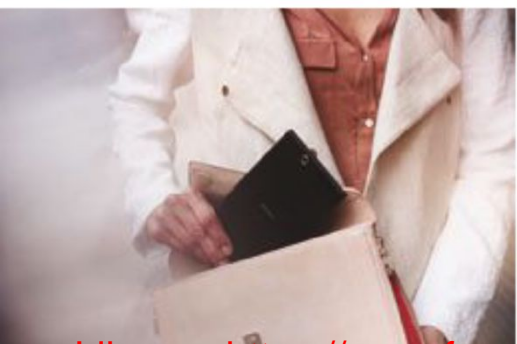
ULTRA SLIM

Impossible is what comes in mind when you face Sony Xperia™ Z Ultra's incredible thinness at 6.5mm. This is all thanks to Sony experts who manage to use their craft to produce the world's slimmest Full HD smartphone*. Just imagine, you can effectively operate this large screen device with just one hand. Also, be very surprised as inside this unbelievably slim body lies a 2.2GHz Qualcomm Snap-dragon 800 quad-core processor, the world's most powerful processor. This is unbounded raw power that is able to take on any tasks that one throws at it.

ULTRA TOUGH

Being the only waterproof Full HD smartphone* around, feel free to pick up calls when it is raining or check your mails when you are near a pool. Bearing a high IP55 and IP58 rating means it is not only waterproof but the Xperia™ Z Ultra is also dust resistant. So what are you waiting for? Take this super smartphone to the next level. Just go below the surface or head out on an adventure as there is no need to worry about this beautifully constructed device.

*For more information, please go to the following link:
<http://www.sonymobile.com/my/legal/testresults/xperia-z-ultra/>



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THE

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SONY 4K

PS4 GOES TO THE WEST

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SAMSUNG

AN ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

SAMUNG G S4 ACTIVE

When I was young, I love running around playing sports like basketball, football and even the old *galah panjang*. Then, one day, I ran along the open wet field, I slipped and fell to a puddle of filthy water. To my horror, my device fell out from my pocket and landed in the water. Almost immediately, the screen starts to fade turning the mobile device into a paper weight. That was the first time I got emotionally hurt.

BE ACTIVE

Enough grandpa story because I am here to tell another story. This time, one with a happy ending. It involves a smartphone called Samsung GALAXY S4 Active. Samsung claimed the most ridiculous thing from this phone: it loves water! What? Really? Why remind me of my horror story? Well, whatever. It is a review unit so I will do what I can to see if it fits such statement.

TOUGHER EXTERIOR

Right out of the box, I see a tougher looking S4. No wonder Samsung added the word 'Active' at the back of the smartphone's name. Also, it seems that the home button has companions as the menu and back buttons are no longer capacitive. Furthermore, the back of the phone no longer houses an elegant glossy plastic. There are four bolts at each corner to hold the phone in place while it uses a mix of textured plastic and toughen plastic adorning the whole phone.

WHAT GLARE?

During my lunchtime, I decided to take this phone for a spin. To my delight, the screen is bright enough for me to use it outdoors. Seriously. Even when the sunlight shines directly on the phone, there is no glare and I can watch videos without a hitch. The sun has finally met its match.



Samsung GALAXY S4 ACTIVE



WHOOOPS-PROOF

Guess what, while having my lunch, one of my colleagues accidentally spill tea on the phone. Not a few drops but half of his cup. Thankfully, the water resistant feature proves to be very useful. To his shock, I decided to wash off the tea with a bottle of water first before wiping it clean. Of course this is just child's play for the S4 Active as it comes with an IP67 rating. This means it can withstand water immersion and dusts stand no chance of entering the smartphone. Awesome!

UNDERWATER EXPLOIT

On my way home, it got me curious. If it can handle such amount of water, what about submerging the whole phone into a tank of water? There is also this Aqua mode for underwater photography. So how does it work? Hello, swimming pool. Taking a quick dive with the phone, everything is fine and dandy with the phone. Additionally, Samsung knows the S4 Active's touchscreen feature cannot work underwater. Instead, it turned the volume button into a shutter button. On that day, I found out I have a talent for such photography or maybe it is just the device's camera.

BUILT FOR LIFE

All this got me excited and more. As the smartphone is also dust resistant and I can replace the flag on my sandcastle with this phone. Imagine all the things that you want to do with



your smartphone and yet restricted because of its fragility. Thanks to Samsung GALAXY S4 Active, I want to go on a new adventure. I know it can take all of my activities.

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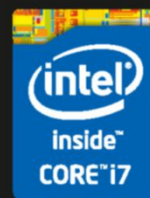
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Four Useful Tricks for Video Marketing on YouTube

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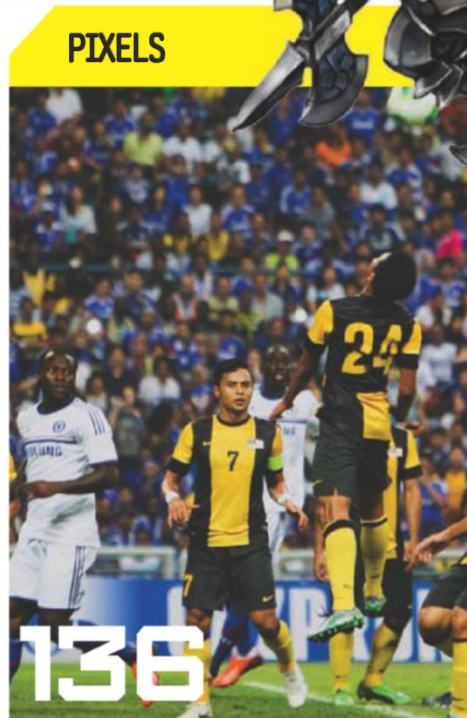
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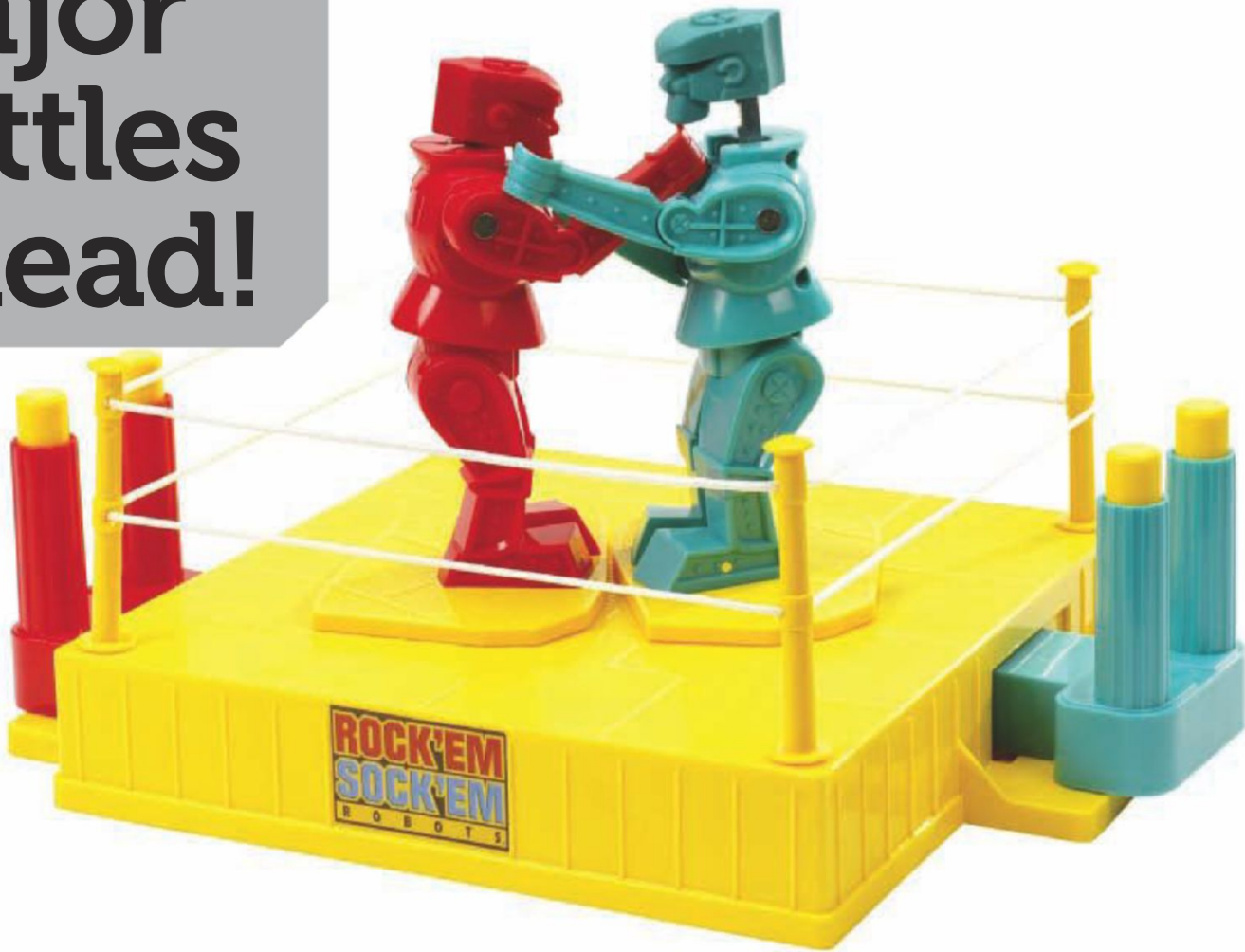
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Major Battles Ahead!



2013 seemed like a lackluster year thanks to a quiet first half with some product updates that sputtered or just didn't impress. There were some bright spots like the launch of Intel's newest CPU, codenamed Haswell, the appearance of improved transformable Ultrabooks and large-screen smartphones, the return of BlackBerry, and the coming of water- and dust-proof devices.

Honestly, only Intel seemed to have made positive waves while the others have mixed reactions. Even so, all of this has made 2013 feel mundane. The stage was set for a ho-hum year. Then July came and things started to look up. This includes Apple being set to announce its new (finally!), and long in development, iteration of the iPhone; Microsoft bucking up with its efforts to do right by introducing a major overhaul of its Windows 8 operating system (OS) while its mobilephone partner - Nokia - is chugging along with newer Lumia devices in the pipeline; Google rolling out a critical upgrade of its Android OS (a sweeter Jelly Bean 4.3) with the much talked about new Google

Nexus 7; and Samsung announcing plans to launch the GALAXY Note III.

Of course, the biggest deal for many has to be the next-gen console reveals as Sony and Microsoft showed off and confirmed their plans for the next-gen consoles, namely PlayStation 4 (PS4) and Xbox One. People are also waiting to see what sort of market changes 4K innovations and Organic-LED screens, which had been shown at this year's Consumer Electronic Show (CES2013), will bring about. From super sharp and vibrant visual performance of TVs, to curved TV screens and flexible displays for mobile devices, many are waiting with bated breaths as to what sort of gadgets and gizmos these new tech would be able to inspire.

That said, the dust hasn't settled for some of the biggest face-offs of the year! 4K versus OLED feels like the second round of the long drawn match between LCD and Plasma. The PS4 and Xbox One, meanwhile, have heated up the arena for the videogaming industry. There is also the three-way battle in the mobilephone industry, which, has picked up momentum again thanks to the new devices that are set to

rollout - namely the new iPhone5 (or is that 6?), Lumia 1020, and Android's top device reps, be it Samsung, HTC, Huawei, or Sony. Even the CPU market has its own battle highlights with Intel, Qualcomm, NVIDIA, and Samsung carving into each other's marketshare in the mobile device space. Intel is finally showing its mettle in the one area it had lost focus on!

What does this all mean for the consumer? Beyond seeing more devices and innovations, they now have a more varied list to choose from when it comes to product and service offerings. It'll be a more interesting second-half for 2013, as we see technology brands and the fan-bases set themselves up for their respective clashes that will determine who among them are the best of the best and would stand triumphant in the arena of awesome.

I know who I am rooting for! Do you?

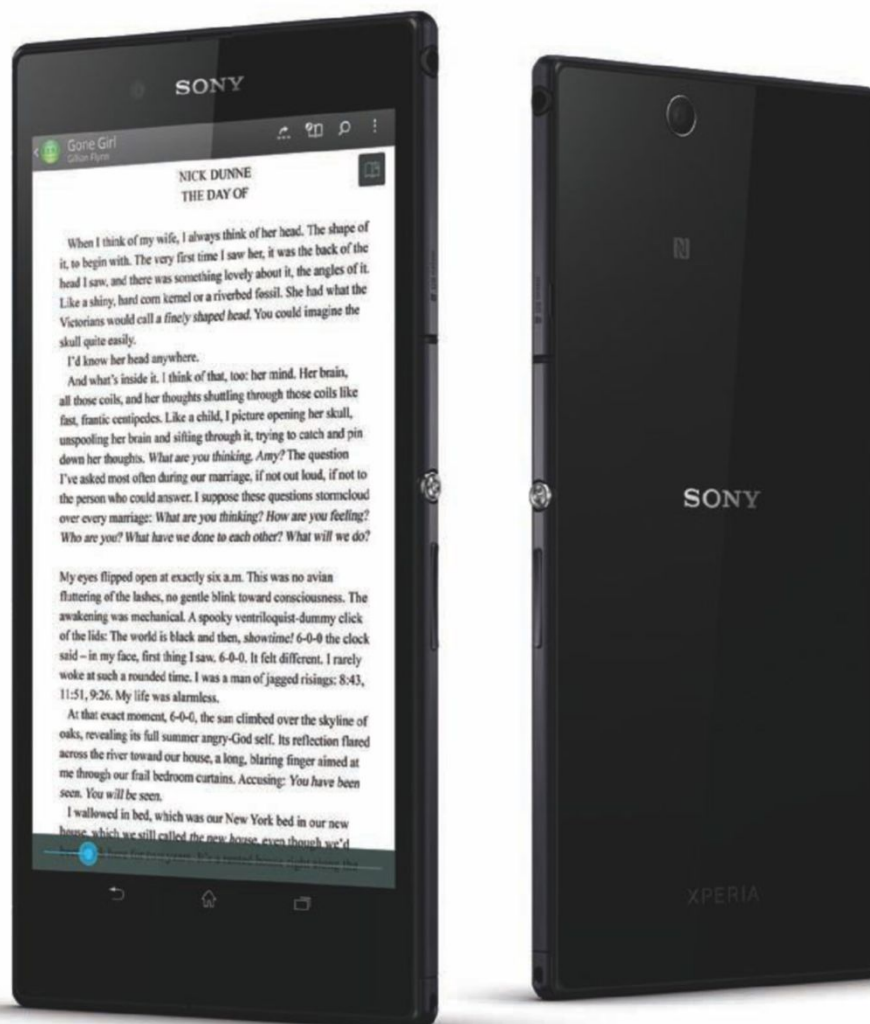
Cheers

Victor Yap

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Future of the Web in Education

10X for education in the developing world



by Vint Cerf, Google Vice President & Chief Internet Evangelist



When one of my colleagues at Google was growing up in India, his school had four textbooks for an entire class. At exam time, they would queue up outside the library, waiting for a classmate to return a textbook so the next student could check it out. Now, we're able to give each child in that same school all the information contained in the web via an Internet-connected device that is simple, manageable, secure and affordable. With some 10x thinking, we can make meaningful improvements in the lives of children around the globe.

For example, last month Malaysia announced that it would be providing lightweight laptops to primary and secondary schools nationwide, and adopted free web-based email, calendar and documents for 10 million students, teachers and parents.

The Internet and the World Wide Web are central parts of Malaysia's national plan to reform its educational system, and that's what makes it of interest to educators and governments worldwide.

Significant possibilities arise, especially in the developing world, when countries decide to put education online. The bottom line is that providing web-based services to students and educators enables access to information and makes it possible for everyone - regardless of financial resources, location or influence - to become educated.

The good news is that the hardest part - inventing new technology - is already far enough along to be harvested. Connectivity options, which are needed to make moving students to the web practical, are improving and becoming

more widespread. 4G is fast and reliable, and increasingly available. Coupled with affordable devices, anyone can fit the world's information into the palm of their hands with mobiles, tablets and notebooks, or by visiting a local Internet cafe.

The Chromebook - a lightweight, web-based computing device that keeps itself updated - is one great example among several such devices. Imagine how much easier it will be for each child to learn when they don't have to wait for an outdated hardcopy textbook, but rather have the entire web, including video lectures, text content, presentations, news sources and even virtual textbooks, at their fingertips.

Governments will need to expand national infrastructure so students in densely packed urban areas and remote rural villages alike can get online. Public-private partnerships are often a good way to do this.

For example, Malaysia is planning for 10,000 public schools to get 4G access this year through a collaboration with a local telco provider.

Once they are online, there's no limit to what students can do with the vast amount of information available to them - and beyond that, how they'll collaborate with and learn from one another.

Imagine students in Malaysia working with students around the world on a weather project. They can conduct virtual experiments, work simultaneously to update data in a spreadsheet or document, and create a shared final presentation. Where desktop or laptop computers aren't widely available, students can use smartphones to augment their learning.


Finally, study groups can be far more accessible and flexible with the web. It might

be difficult for a child to go to a classmate's house to study after school, because of bad roads, unsafe neighborhoods, or parents who are working and can't provide a lift (or don't own a car). With sufficient bandwidth, students can now meet up via Google+ Hangouts and study together virtually. Distances and economic means no longer matter, although time zones are still important!

When I was teaching at Stanford in the 1970s, my classes were broadcast around the San Francisco Bay Area. We also sent videotapes of lectures to other places further afield. Now with the web, teachers can record their lectures, upload them, and students anywhere can watch them as many times as they want.

MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) offer free or low-cost, high-quality higher-ed classes to hundreds of thousands of people on the Internet. This is 10X thinking - how do we reach more people and make it easier to learn whatever and wherever you want - and I see similar opportunities coming to K-12 in the future, too.

We should be excited about bringing the web to the classroom. The technology is there, and if we work together, we can bring the web to everyone. Education is one of last big sectors yet to be revolutionized by the digital age; but why shouldn't it be? We can get there with improved infrastructure, inexpensive devices that are easy to manage, and with governments, teachers and parents that understand technology's educational value working together.

I believe the Web is the fuel of the 21st century, and it will propel students of all ages, from all corners of the globe, into a successful future. 

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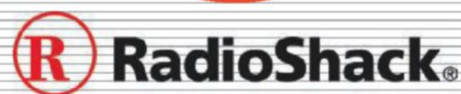



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Vinodhani Nair K The whip is out! 08/08/2013 12:32 56KB	>	<p>From She Nicholas</p> <p>Does new media, such as blogs and social networks, have any effect on human behaviour?</p> <hr/> <p>Reply</p> <p>To She Nicholas</p> <p>From PC.com</p> <div style="display: flex;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>While a lot of research out there mentioned that new media has some effect on human behaviour, it does not necessarily change how a human behaves, just like their buying habits. According to Fleishman Hillard 2012 Digital Influence Index, 89% of its surveyed sample use search engines to make buying decisions. This shows that people are more willing to look for information or reviews on the web, instead of listening from a sales person's pitch. When it comes to the whole human behaviour thing, we would like to think so as well. Just look at how one behaves online and offline. It is, strangely, vastly different.</p> </div> </div>
Victor Yap Dying 10/08/2013 14:43 5KB	>	
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With wireless charging present in Nokia, Samsung and others, all of which follow the Qi standard, will such a trend have a place in the future of mobile charging? Although it is termed 'wireless', the maximum 'wireless' distance this sort of charging has is no more than two inches from the charging pad/surface. Is this technology just a fad or does it have potential but needs time to mature?

I-Ern Koh

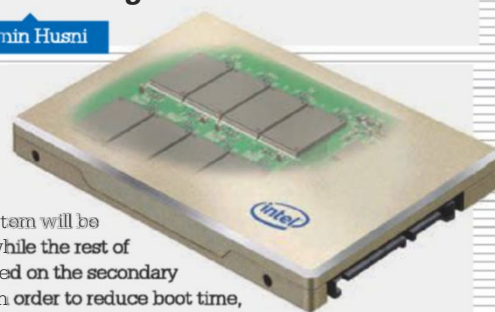
Well, it seems that the term 'wireless charging' has been blown out of proportions. The idea here is about reducing the wire clutter and hence the simple concept of placing a device on a mat to recharge. Thanks to the power of the media and wild speculation (and probably over-claiming), people now think that wireless charging can work the same way as a wireless network. Currently, this is what we have and it is probably the most advanced technology so far. The only thing we can do is to wait for it to mature. Remember, we're only touching the surface of these sort of innovation. What we need now is for more research and development to dig deeper and come up with better concepts.



Between SSD and hybrid SSD, which will take off as the next affordable and more common storage device in the near future?

Amin Husni

Looking at the current trend, manufacturers are going for the hybrid build. Normally, the entire operating system will be placed in the SSD while the rest of the data will be stored on the secondary HDD. This is done in order to reduce boot time, which is why your PC is able to turn on in less than 10 seconds instead of the usual five minutes. The configuration can save manufacturers more money as the SSD doesn't need a lot of storage space. As such, this may be the preferred choice for now.





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Sony Brings Out New 4Ks

New 65in and 55in 4K LED TVs Aim to Wow

by victor yap

On the heels of the successful launch of the 84in 4K LED TV in 2012, Sony has rolled out to market its new 65in and 55in LED TVs for its KD-X9004A Series line-up, with the aim of expanding its 4K LED TV to a broader range of consumers. Offering the same visual performance of the predecessor, which is four times the resolution of a Full HD TV, the two new 4K LED TVs, now using the new 'Sense of Quartz' design, are expected to deliver the most immersive home entertainment experience possible to users.

Upon purchasing the new 4K TVs, users will receive five 'Mastered in 4K' Blu-ray discs once they register their product warranty. This is part of the bundle programme that Sony is offering to its customers. For those who do not want the Enhanced Blu-rays, they can opt for a Blu-ray player that is purposely designed to upscale any content it plays or a home entertainment system.


To ensure the best performance, the new 4K TVs, which are priced at RM23,999 (65in) and RM16,999 (55in), are using the newly developed 4K X-reality PRO processing engine that Sony developed to specifically reduce visual noise, enhance image sharpening, and upscale 2K content to near 4K native resolution. To enhance the visual performance further, the X-Series TVs have also employed the latest Reality Creation database and Super Resolution processing function, both of which are used to optimise images as well as produce stunning visuals that are richer in colour and exceptionally sharp.

Backing the X-reality engine is the TRILUMINOS Display LED backlighting, which is used in the 4K LED TVs to present rich, authentic colour with subtle tones while also replicating bold hues, which include hard-to-



reproduce reds and greens. By integrating OD Vision's Colour IQ optical component with Sony's unique display technologies, the new Sony 4Ks now have a wider colour gamut that is far more natural yet brilliantly vivid. This is due to the heightened sense of depth the TVs are able to produce.

Sony's biggest surprise is not how bright and colourful the visuals are on the new 4K TVs, but the sound production that they both offer. To complete the entire 4K experience, Sony has incorporated an end-to-end Sony audio solution, which consist of its proprietary Magnetic Fluid Speaker technology, damper-less speaker structure, and super slim chassis. The combination of these innovations are supposed to deliver sound pressure levels that are higher than conventional TVs, which means an almost pure sound production that has crisp mid- and high-frequencies.

Using genuine metal and glass material as part of the 'Sense of Quartz' concept, these TVs are made to be the centrepiece of one's home entertainment system. In every sense of the word. For the home theatre enthusiast, this is the big screen, super sharp, hyper vivid TV to look out for. 



What is the best HASWELL motherboard?

The latest 4th generation Intel® Core™ processors are here. With them arrives a new generation of seriously advanced motherboards. These are exciting developments but how do you decide which motherboard is right for you?

Design and specifications should be right at the top of your shopping list – it would be a big mistake to buy a powerful processor only to plug it into a motherboard that hasn't had every single one of its design features thought through.

As you'd expect from a company with such a long heritage and fine reputation, ASUS Z87 series motherboards employ only the latest and very smartest technologies. This extends from blisteringly fast connectivity options — including 802.11ac Wi-Fi that's up to three times quicker than traditional wireless technologies, USB 3.0 and Thunderbolt ports and onboard Intel Gigabit Ethernet — to efficient and incredibly precise power regulation, thanks to ASUS DIGI+ Power Control design.

Advanced Tweaking with Easy Tools

Clearly, ASUS Z87 series motherboards have great specifications, but even the finest components can be let down by poor design elsewhere — which is why ASUS engineers devote enormous effort to developing tools that enable users to control these amazing motherboards.

ASUS AI Suite 3 is at the forefront. Its attractive and clear interface gathers all unique features together, allowing you to concentrate on fine-tuning your system for the best balance between performance, stability and efficiency

without switching back and forth between different features.

With ASUS Z87 series the latest addition to AI Suite is Dual Intelligent Processors 4 with 4-Way Optimization, an easy-to-use tuning tool that unlocks your system's true potential — automatically. It picks the perfect balance among overclocking, cooling, power delivery and efficiency to match how you use your computer. Highest speeds and best cooling for gaming, or lower energy use for productivity.

Sleeker and More Responsive Mouse Control with the UEFI BIOS

ASUS engineers' attention design detail doesn't stop there. The Z87 Series' new UEFI BIOS displays a clear, simple interface and is crammed with features. Quick Note, for example, allows you to record notes about BIOS changes, while Last Modified keeps track of previous configurations. You can even set up shortcuts and favorites for quick access to the options you use most often. Plus, overall the sleeker and responsive mouse control is really perfect with our BIOS experience.

To build the best PC you need the best motherboard. As we've seen, ASUS Z87 series motherboards combine the finest components with brilliantly simple software. So, choose an ASUS Z87 series motherboard — and benefit from the ASUS advantages.



New Tech Spotted!

Long-term PC user Michael was excited to be told about an exclusive new technology from ASUS. "This is really great," remarked Michael. "I've decided to buy one and experience how it simplifies the way I interact with my computer".

What is the hot new technology that's got Michael so enthused? ASUS NFC Express — a brilliantly clever accessory for the latest ASUS motherboards that transforms the way people connect to their PCs.

NFC Express uses near-field communication (NFC) technology to detect and interact with other NFC equipment. For example, you can log in to Windows 8 simply by tapping the included NFC tag across NFC Express — eliminating the need to type in passwords and launch all your favorite apps at once.

NFC Express communicates with loads of modern smartphones and tablets with the free Wi-Fi GO! & NFC Remote companion app as well: just tap your device against NFC Express to synchronize your device, backing up photos and videos with no hassle and even control your PC remotely using your smart device, without any complex set-up.



The World's Best Selling and Most Award Winning Motherboards





Kwon with LG's new line-up of ULTRA HD TVs at the media showcase.

LG flaunts its UHD TVs to Malaysians

Giant TVs used to be seen only at tradeshows, with television manufacturers each trying to be better than the other with ever-bigger plasma and LCD screens. LG Electronics (LG) recently showcased its new 55- and 65-inch ULTRA HD TVs (both coming under the LA9700 range) as part of its expansion for its 4K TV line-up.

Although smaller in scale than the ground breaking 84in model, LG's new ULTRA HD TVs

offer the same incredible sense of immersion, stunningly sharp picture quality, and exceptional colour contrast with these new TVs. Additionally, the 55- and the 65-inch models feature powerful audio systems and utilise a captivating design that give consumers an irresistible home entertainment experience.

"By introducing 55in and 65in screen sizes, we are aiming to expand the ULTRA HD market and further solidifying our position as the leader in next generation display technology," says

HK Kwon, Managing Director of LG Electronics (M) Sdn Bhd.

To achieve such great clarity, the two ULTRA HD TVs are able to deliver an incredible 8.3 million pixels on their display panels. Enabling the new models to achieve this superior screen resolution is LG's Tru-ULTRA HD Engine, which is able to upscale any video format into crisp, near ULTRA HD picture quality.

The LA9700 models also incorporate In-Plane Switching (IPS) display panels, which offer incredible colour expression and a wide, 178-degree viewing angle. Users can enjoy their movies on the new LG ULTRA HD TVs from almost any position in the room, without having to worry about colour distortion or loss of visual detail.

In terms of sound performance, the new models now use a 4.1 channel, 50W sound system that uses a Sliding Speaker concept. This cleverly concealed sound bar has four forward-facing speakers that is able to fill the room with excellent sound expression across the mid- and high-frequency ranges.

"Besides the new TVs, we are also looking to bring in some other awesome TVs into Malaysia. As you've seen the only OLED TV at this launch, we are now planning the rollout of our Curved OLED TVs. Do keep an eye out for it!" Kwon adds.

(From left) Kwon; Justin Seng, Manager, Product Management of Home Entertainment, LG Electronics Malaysia; and Joanne Foo, General Manager, Marketing Department, LG Electronics Malaysia, posing with LG's new line-up of ULTRA HD TVs at the media showcase.



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Rocking New Motherboards

ASRock's powerful comeback



A

SRock unveils a new wave of Intel 8 Series motherboards, which will be diversified towards three distinctive targets of interest: Fatal1ty Z87 Professional, Z87 Extreme9/ac, and Z87 OC Formula. Additionally, the ASRock M8 made a surprise appearance showing off that it is more than just a concept or a stylish chassis.

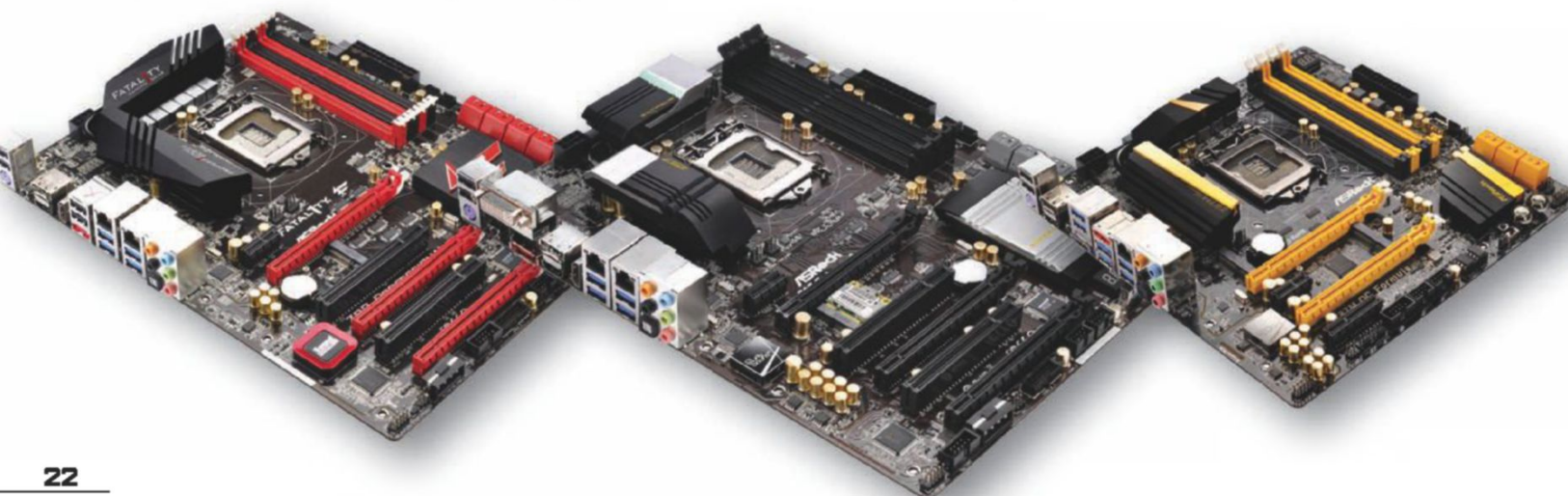
Based on A-Style features, the Extreme9/ac comes with Purity Sound, powered with the latest Realtek ALC1150 audio codec. There is also the capless Direct Drive technology, EMI shielding cover, PCB isolate shielding, and support for DTS Connect. With 'ac' plastered on its name, it is easy to tell that the motherboard also supports

transfer speeds. Conformal Coating is also used to protect this motherboard against conductive liquids, corrosion, dust and extreme temperatures.

Moving on to the OC Formula series motherboards, it is adorned with a typical yellow and black design. Conformal Coating is also present as well, providing better protection against extreme elements. Additionally, the Power Kits, Connector Kits, and Cooling Kits are also joined by the Monitor Kit's Status OLED. This new kit shows various information of the system on a new high resolution OLED screen and also allow users to toggle between information of the power-on self-test, debug codes, the current time,

various points on the motherboards.

Coming in with numerous hardware perks and sporting the codename, Gaming Armour, the Fatal1ty series motherboards are designed for improving the system's performance and stability when gaming. What it does is enhance the motherboard's CPU power connectors, PCI-E slots, LAN connection, heat dissipation, and on-board audio system. Beside this, there are also two major features called Sniper Key and Macro Key. Both are designed to improve mouse and keyboard functions, featuring customisable macros, sniper modes, and key repeat rates and repeat delays.



The understated highlight of the M8 is the aluminium case is not a motherboard and admirer. Gamers in the moment, just as a racer, he makes his case President of

Under the hood of the M8 is an ASRock mini-PC with an advanced A-Commander provides added OLED display the system's additional monitor. supported via a riser card that ASRock a NVIDIA Titan X GPU, one has direct access to

"Our goal with the M8 is to create desirability in all Gaming PC,"

adds Sonja Schiefer, Director, Munich Studio, BMW Group DesignworksUSA. "We created a design language that focused on the superlative and, as such, felt it appropriate to come up with a design solution that is very much an exaggerated mode of expression." **PC**



Fire Away

CROSSFIRE SEA
officially shows off its
new and first online FPS

SmileGate SEA announces the official launching of the company's first online First-Person Shooter (FPS) game, called CROSSFIRE SEA, via Gambooz Portal. CROSSFIRE is a fast-paced Online FPS Game that provides a sense of realism in Movement, Weapon, Character and Environment Design, all of which are based on real-life simulation. According to the company, the game is designed to give players of different preferences a variety of weapons selection, character customisation, and a large array of maps to choose from.

The gaming modes available include:

- Ghost Mode - In the game, there are two factions - the Black List, which operates as ghosts who plant explosive and attack the opposing team and Global Risk, which interfere with enemy teams by defusing explosives and killing the terrorist organisation outright
- Mutant Mode - In this mode, while Black



combat, a human was infected and turned to a Mutant. This mutant will continuously infect other players, causing both teams to team up and wipe out the external threat

- AI Mode - Black List and Global Risk work together to withstand aggressive mobs of Mutant Soldiers led by a Mutant Boss as they struggle to escape the gaming arena. **PC**

Talk and Zoom

Samsung introduces Galaxy S4 zoom

by noraisyah aziz



The wait is finally over. Samsung Malaysia Electronics has launched the Samsung GALAXY S4 zoom, an impressive hybrid device that combines the latest GALAXY S4 smartphone with advanced photography capabilities. This will be a great device for all mobile photography junkies out there.


The GALAXY S4 zoom, now available at RM 1,699, runs on Android Jelly Bean 4.2 and has many of the same features present on the GALAXY S4, including the updated Touchwiz. It is also the realisation of Samsung's mission to create a single device that can fulfil the roles of both a beastly smartphone and a high-end compact camera. This phone and camera combination claims to have the best-in-class 10x Optical Zoom, 16MP CMOS Sensor, which is able to capture beautiful images, a built-in Optical Image Stabiliser (OIS) that helps the lens and sensor stay still, and a Xenon Flash.

With the very latest Samsung GALAXY S4 technology, the GALAXY S4 zoom sets new standards for perfect mobile photography.

"In launching the GALAXY S4 zoom, Samsung has embarked on yet another groundbreaking journey that enhances the lives of our consumers," says Kwon Jae Hoon, Managing

Director, Samsung Malaysia Electronics. "The need to capture and share moments on the highest quality possible setting is growing rapidly as communications become increasingly visual in nature. For people who do not have the space to carry a dedicated camera around, the GALAXY S4 zoom will be a welcomed companion in their lives. Combining the industry leading functionality and connectivity of the GALAXY S4 with high photographic experience you'd expect from a compact camera, the GALAXY S4 zoom provides the best of both worlds."

One of the features that have been highlighted is Photo Suggest, which instantly connects users to huge libraries of images taken by fellow photographers, to help locate and compose the best shots anywhere in the world. It can even direct users to the ideal nearby location where users can take that perfect photo.

For easy camera navigation, the Zoom Ring can be used to activate the Quick Launch and Shortcut features, giving users instant access to multiple camera modes, including Auto, Gallery and Smart Mode with a simple twist. Besides that, it can activate the In-Call Photo Share feature, letting users capture and send an image directly via MMS to the person on the other end of the line. 



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(From left) Steve Chan, Product Marketing Manager, Malaysia and Brunei of Nokia and Dick Yoong, Country Manager, Malaysia and Brunei of Nokia posing with the new Lumia 625.

Larger LTE Lumia

by calvin khong

Nokia releases the most affordable LTE Windows Phone 8

Nokia recently announced the availability of the Nokia Lumia 625 smartphone in Malaysia, offering affordable LTE connectivity with a 4.7in screen to ensure a seamless entertainment experience. The Windows Phone 8 (WP8) powered Lumia 625, priced at a RRP of RM939, is already available for purchase in the Klang Valley and early-September for the rest of Malaysia.


"The launch of Nokia Lumia 625 extends our range of Lumia devices in Malaysia. With leading technologies, such as using LTE connectivity, which is paired with key features like the 4.7-inch screen, featuring the largest screen display among Nokia Lumia devices to date, and having a number of interchangeable shells. As such, the Nokia Lumia 625 offers an experience that is uniquely Nokia," says Gary Chan, Head of Marketing, Nokia Pan Asia. "We, at Nokia, always believe in taking technology to the masses and with the introduction of Nokia Lumia 625, an affordable LTE device, we are a step closer to our goal."

With its new expressive designs, the Nokia Lumia 625 offers the choice of five semi-transparent switchable shells - coming in orange, bright green, yellow, white and black, which adds to the Live Tile personalisation that WP8 offers.

Being the first affordable smartphone in, Nokia's range that feature LTE technology, users will be able to enjoy new levels of mobile broadband speeds. As of now, the company is in talks with telcos to arrange for device deals. It will make the necessary announcements when the packages becomes available.

The 4.7in screen is meant to offer a better multimedia experience, meaning users get more space to watch videos on Vimeo, play

games, go through apps, and even have a better time navigating with HERE Maps and Drive. Aside from this, users have access to over 170,000 apps and Nokia services out of the box.

The Nokia Smart Camera app seen in Nokia Lumia 925 makes a comeback on the Lumia 625 as well, allowing users to capture and edit pictures with options like Best Shot, Action Shot, and Motion Focus. This is to create a different feel in the images that are edited on the app. The new Nokia Cinemagraph that comes loaded with the Lumia 625 is another fun innovation that adds movements into photos. Perfect for those who want some amusing video effects in their pictures. 





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Gadget Mania and More

HP aims to stay ahead by banking on consumer and infrastructure trends of today by vinodhani nair k.



The HP management team at the products launch.

It was good news all around for market sectors of the enterprise segment with emphasis on improved productivity and efficiency; however, the cheer was even louder for the consumer and business markets as they still rank high on HP's agenda during the HP World Tour in Beijing, China recently.

From notebooks, tablets, detachables, and All-in-One PCs that give people more flexibility in how they access and share information, these devices provide seamless integration of technology into peoples' busy lives through affordable touch technology, multi operating system (OS) options, and new form factors.

The range of products and more is increasingly aimed at transforming the way people engage and consume content by providing

new connected experiences and creating new possibilities.

"People need mobility and flexibility in their computing devices for effortless access to their content anytime, anywhere, from any device," says Nick Lazaridis, Chief Operating Officer and Acting Senior Vice President, HP Printing and Personal Systems APJ.

"HP is designing next-generation form factors, supported by a multi OS strategy that brings new touch experiences to help them connect, share and create in ways they had never imagined."

Sharing her excitement over the new products that are about to hit the market, Yam Su Yin, Senior Director, Consumer Personal Computing Systems and Media Tablet Business Unit, Printing and Personal Systems Group, HP APJ says: "HP

launched a wide range of innovations that are supposed to change the way you communicate with each other. We focused on everything to provide our users with the richest range of products.

"We bring relevant concepts to users that are affordable. Asia loves these things, which is why we strive to give the best deal in town."

Set to launch more than 20 over products this year, HP is focused on providing the richest range of devices and services to consumers. While admitting it is late to the game with its tablets, HP believes it does have products that will be in demand with consumers.

Yam also divulges that the tech giant has plans to re-enter the smartphone market, offering a differentiated experience. However,

she declines to reveal more, only saying that the potential in Asia is great and it is the fastest growing market in PCs and tablets.

As for next-generation form factors, HP reveals its SlateBook x2 and the Split x2, offering the full functionality of a notebook with a removable screen that is also a sleek tablet.

Powered with Android and Microsoft Windows 8 respectively, these two-in-one devices combine performance and portability, giving people the flexibility to create, consume, and share content in more places.

HP also offers an intuitive Windows 8 touch experience at great value with its new All-in-One PCs and powerful consumer notebooks, such as the HP ENVY Rove20 mobile All-in-One PC, HP Pavilion 11 TouchSmart Notebook, and HP ENVY TouchSmart 14 Ultrabook. Multi OS devices are also a hit these days and HP delivers with its 7-inch diagonal screen HP Slate7 and HP Pavilion 14 Chromebook.

Besides consumers, business users also have reason to cheer with HP's expanded portfolio of products and solutions, which are designed to help organisations save time and resources. The new offerings integrate seamlessly into existing enterprise environments and advance the speed of the organisation by increasing efficiency in creating, accessing and consuming content.

New HP Pro and HP Elite series desktop PCs, including space-saving commercial all-in-ones (AiOs) with rich multimedia and optional touch screens, act as the hub of enterprise productivity.

HP also introduced new solutions that aid in growth and efficiency, such as HP Exstream; secure, mobile printing with HP ePrint Enterprise; as well as a mobile point-of-sale solution based on the HP ElitePad, HP's first tablet built for business. It also has a new suite of services - HP Page Plan, HP Priority Services, HP Deployment Services, and Mixed Asset Recovery Services - all of which are designed to maximise productivity for businesses.

ATTUNED TO MARKET NEEDS

As the IT industry constantly evolves, it is only natural for leading tech companies in the industry to predict, evolve, and stay ahead in the minds of consumers and the business segments.

Understanding three big infrastructure trends that are happening now, HP is all set to take advantage of these three for the benefits of its customers. It identifies converged infrastructure, Cloud, and software defined data centres as the three industries that would lead technology innovation, which HP happens to be in the forefront of.

Says Jim Merritt, Senior VP and General Manager Hewlett Packard (HP) Enterprise Group, Asia Pacific and Japan (APJ): "Converged infrastructure is the way forward for many as it helps reduce overall IT costs for customers. The Cloud also helps to make and take their products or solutions faster to market, while software defined data centres now allow customers to decide how to use software for their day-to-day work operations.

"HP's Converged Infrastructure accelerates time-to-value and time-to-applications by rapidly and securely transforming technology into a business advantage."

Why this matters to businesses in this region is that it "delivers the speed, simplicity and efficiency, which enables organisations to succeed in APJ's dynamic and increasingly connected markets."

HP also claims to be the first to announce a Convergence strategy in most markets and seems to enjoy a leading position in every one of them. As it goes on to create awareness and educate enterprise or small- and medium-businesses (SMBs) on this strategy, a dedicated team is formed in most markets to show them how they can exploit converged infrastructure as well as promote the message along.

Where converged infrastructure is concerned, HP expanded its Converged Storage portfolio with a solid-state optimised all-flash HP 3PAR StoreServ system that delivers performance and low latency without compromising enterprise resiliency or adding datacentre complexity. It also extended its six-year lead in software-defined storage with a new HP StoreOnce Virtual Storage Appliance (VSA), which is supposed to cut the cost of small site backups by up to 65%.

As we speak about converged infrastructure, it is only natural that Big Data comes into play and how one complements the other is also



undeniable. Sharing his thoughts on the matter is Mohan Krishnan, VP and General Manager Technology Consulting, Technology Services, HP APJ.

While Big Data seems to be a big topic now, not many truly understand its concept. Mohan believes that every enterprise action leaves a unique footprint and that would ultimately create sheer volumes of data, which happens to be one of the four big challenges for Big Data.

To this end, HP announced it has expanded its Big Data Consulting Practice with new services that enable customers to plan, implement and maintain an IT infrastructure that supports Big Data initiatives that are meant to reduce costs and improve IT productivity. Organisations understand the value and benefits derived from Big Data. However, as data increases in volume, variety, velocity and vulnerability, it adds cost, complexity and pressure on an organisation's IT resources and infrastructure.

Mohan says that the HP Big Data Infrastructure Consulting services will be able to prepare organisations with taking advantage of Big Data. "Businesses want to accelerate the monetisation of Big Data trend, but do not fully comprehend the impact, strain and complexity involved in building an integrated, well-managed big data environment.

"HP Technology Services help customers develop a strategic approach to Big Data, ensuring they have the necessary plan, infrastructure and protection in place to gain real-time insight that enables data to become a competitive edge for the business.

"We enable companies to take advantage of their infrastructure, on which Big Data can be built upon. And we are doing it by creating customer awareness through our Transformation Experience Workshops, which is being carried out in markets we are in."

This seems to be a very attentive and proactive way to educate and bring the market up to speed with what converged infrastructure and Big Data can do for a business. **PC**

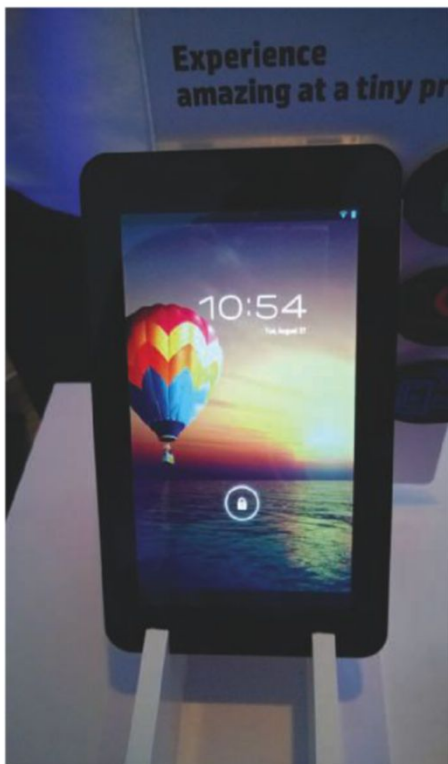


Android on Slate

HP unveils new Android-based Slate series by calvin khong



Yong; Loh Wai Mun, Country Category Manager, Printing and Personal Systems Group, HP Malaysia; and James Low, Marketing Development Manager, Consumer Notebook, Printing and Personal Systems Group, HP Malaysia with the new Slates.



HP announced the arrival of three new Android-based consumer devices in Malaysia - the HP Slate 7, HP SlateBook x2, and HP Slate 21. Putting focus on Google's operating system (OS), HP aims to help users to easily transition from creation, and productivity to entertainment through the integration of touch technology and new form factors.

"People need mobility and flexibility in their computing devices so they can effortlessly get access to their content anytime, anywhere, from any device. HP is designing next-generation form factors, supported by the Android platform that brings new touch experiences to help them connect, share, and create in ways they never imagine," says Serena Yong, General Manager, Printing & Personal Systems Group, Singapore and Malaysia, HP.

First off is the Slate 7, which comes with Beats Audio technology. With Android 4.1 Jelly Bean inside, it offers the intimate Google experience with native apps like Gmail and YouTube. Powered by an ARM Cortex A9 dual-core processor, the Slate 7 comes with a High-aperture-ratio Field Fringe Switching (HFFS) panel, which offer wide viewing angles. It also

includes a 3MP camera at the back and VGA camera on the front for video calling. Already available in the market, it is priced at RM499 and comes in red or silver.

Taking design cues from the Windows-based HP Envy x2, the SlateBook x2 also enables people to switch between tablet and notebook modes. The Android 4.2 Jelly Bean device uses a magnetic hinge design and dual battery system (one in tablet and one in the base) for easy switching. Additionally, it also comes with an NVIDIA Tegra 4 mobile processor, which means the SlateBook x2 has native access to TegraZone. The recommended retail price for this gadget is RM1,499.

Last but not least is the HP Slate 21 All-in-One machine, which helps magnify users' Android experience. As the name suggest, it comes in a 21.5in desktop mode and operates with a full touchscreen. Going for a more family approach, the company mentions that the device provides easy access to entertainment and productivity features plus fun Android apps. The Android 4.2 OS and an NVIDIA Tegra 4 processor powers up the whole device. The AiO is already available and is priced at RM1,099.



msi
Notebook

MSI recommends Windows 8.



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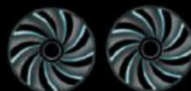
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Celcom Introduces ESCAPE

Launch of new digital entertainment space for subscribers

A whole new world of digital entertainment is now available for over 13 million Celcom mobile customers with the launch of ESCAPE - a personal entertainment space with 'not-to-be-missed events and irresistible moments' that subscribers can enjoy anytime and anywhere.

ESCAPE allows subscribers to enjoy various forms of content that are created, produced and packaged to suit a digital mobile lifestyle. Not only are they affordably priced, they also work to enhance the users' personal preference. This includes watching movies, TV series, live broadcasts and events in high resolution with a unique 'pause and play' feature that can be used across multiple smart devices.

As a user's preferences and purchases are stored online, the 'pause and play' feature comes to immediate effect, giving subscribers the control of pausing content midway on one device, which can then be continued on a different device when they log in.

ESCAPE, a service that ESCAPE Axiata Sdn Bhd - a wholly owned subsidiary of Celcom Axiata Berhad - developed, is a new area of focus for the telco and its customers. This new service will be available only to Celcom's postpaid and prepaid customers. All they need to do is to sign up via a simple two-step process. Users can opt to register via Facebook or through a valid Celcom mobile number at the ESCAPE website - www.escnow.com - after which they will be requested to verify their registration via their Celcom mobile number. Once registration is completed, users can immediately log on and enjoy the service.

Content on ESCAPE is available on individual rental or with a 30-day, all-access passes, which are named "Watch One" and "Watch All" respectively. Subscribers can pay for billable content via their Celcom postpaid or prepaid accounts or credit cards.



All smiles: (from left) Dato' Sri Jamaludin Ibrahim, Managing Director/President & Group Chief Executive Officer of Axiata Group Berhad; Dato' Sri Ahmad Shabery Cheek, Minister of Communication and Multimedia Malaysia; and Shazalli celebrating the launch of ESCAPE.

According to Dato' Sri Shazalli Ramly, CEO of Celcom Axiata Berhad: "ESCAPE represents a revolutionary digital service that will change the way Celcom customers enjoy seamless digital entertainment wherever they are in Celcom's Fastest Territory. With this groundbreaking entrance into digital entertainment, ESCAPE will open doors to exclusive local content as well as world-class programmes and shows through our fastest and widest mobile network, giving our customers unlimited entertainment at their fingertips."

With ESCAPE, Celcom subscribers can look forward to amazing new reality shows, first-hand previews of the latest local blockbusters, and an ever-expanding library of content tailored for Malaysian audiences in addition to international movies. The telco believes it can deliver this promise due to its strong investments in its mobile network, which resulted in fast data connections through Celcom's new LTE platform. This is further complemented by its current HSPA+ (3G) speeds of up to 42Mbps in urban centres.

Currently, Celcom has more than 300 LTE sites and is aiming to increase this to 1,200 LTE

sites by February 2014, covering 33 strategic districts nationwide. Celcom is also spending RM420 million of its CAPEX budget to enhance its nationwide network for LTE deployment.

In terms of content offerings, ESCAPE has signed on partnership agreements with notable Malaysian entertainment producers from Excellent Pictures, Global Station, idoTTV, KRU Studios, Skop Productions, Suhan Movies, and Tall Order Productions.

In a surprise revelation, International Superstar, Martial Artist and Movie Industry Veteran Jackie Chan was named as ESCAPE's new brand ambassador. Chan, who also addressed the crowd virtually during the launch, will be featured on ESCAPE's new television and print advertisements.

As an added incentive for Celcom's customers, subscribers under Celcom First will enjoy RM54 worth of movies and events on ESCAPE over three months by sending 'ESCAPE' to 28882 via SMS. Prepaid customers on Xpax, U.O.X., S.O.X., and Celcom Frenz who register via the same steps will be able to enjoy RM6 worth of movies and events when they reload RM10 into their prepaid account or RM18's worth of content upon reloading RM30. Both promotions are valid from now until 31 December 2013.

The service will be available for Android and iOS devices as a free downloadable app, meaning subscribers can access their favourite content on their mobiles and tablets for a truly universal entertainment experience.

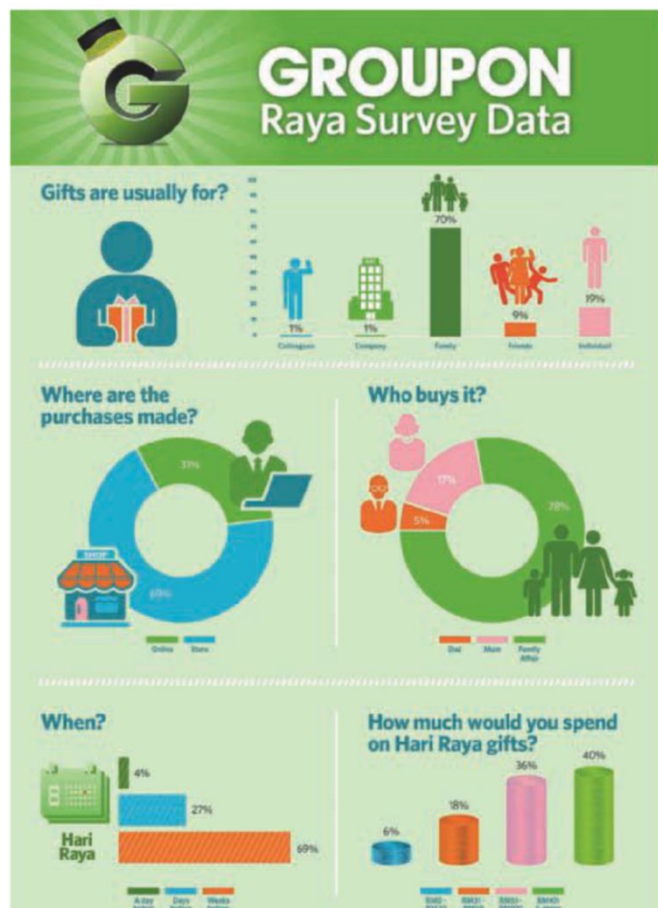
For more information, visit www.escnow.com. 



Shazalli: "As Celcom's groundbreaking entrance into digital entertainment, ESCAPE embodies irresistible moments and unmissable events and will open doors to exclusive local content as well as world-class programmes and shows."

Groupon Malaysia Discovers Rising E-Commerce Popularity

Study also reveals Hari Raya Shopping trends



A recent survey by Groupon Malaysia has discovered that as many as 31% of Malaysian consumers preferred to do their Hari Raya shopping via online platforms.


"Being a core component of social e-commerce in Malaysia, we sought to utilise this survey as a means of better understanding consumer spending habits so as to be able to constantly improve our own services and offers, which in turn allows us to generate the very best deals possible. As such, we were pleased to discover that the industry continues to grow in popularity with shopping trends around even more traditional celebrations generating a considerable boost

to the number of online transactions," says Rafiq Razali, Country General Manager of Groupon Malaysia.

According to a Nielsen 2011 study, Malaysia's online commerce sector had grown to a value of RM 1.97 billion (US\$ 654 million) in transactions, a growth of 9% compared to 2010. This demonstrates the potential for significant growth in the years to come.

Rafiq also adds that as the nation's leading social e-commerce platform, he hopes that more and more Malaysians would appreciate the value of online shopping platforms, such as Groupon, in aiding in the growth of their business potential.

"Social e-commerce continues to perform at a healthy pace in Malaysia and has in very real ways provided SME's, entrepreneurs and even national brands with a revitalisation of commercial activity. Through this survey, as well as numerous other initiatives geared towards supporting our merchant partners, we hope to provide enterprising Malaysians and businesses with unique opportunities to create amazing life experiences for their customers for years to come," adds Rafiq.

The Groupon Malaysia Hari Raya survey was conducted via online channels from amongst the company's subscriber base in Malaysia. For further information regarding Groupon Malaysia visit www.groupon.my. 

From Many to Infinity



John Day demonstrates how the Disney Infinity base works.

Disney and Pixar Animation Studios bring popular characters into one game by calvin khong

Disney Interactive recently unveiled its gaming initiative, called Disney Infinity. By unlocking creative freedom within the game, players can create stories and play in many different worlds, starring characters from The Walt Disney Company and Pixar Animation Studios. All of these worlds exist on the PlayStation 3 (PS3), Xbox 360, Wii and Wii U. The mobile platforms, meanwhile, are designed to be a different game but still feature a lot of similarities. As for the PC version, it will be coming out soon.

"Disney Infinity introduces new ways to interact with the best of Disney on one game platform, both now and in the future. With this innovative approach to gaming, Disney Infinity will bring to life new characters, stories, and environments from The Walt Disney Company over time in a way that will delight fans and gamers alike," says John Pleasants, Co-President of Disney Interactive.


Aside from being a game, Disney also integrated collectible character figures that come to life when they are used in the game. These figures can be collected and used in a play area, called Toy Box. Currently, a total of 40 collectable interactive figures - characters, Play Set pieces, and Power Discs - are available and fully designed to allow players to expand and customise their Disney Infinity experiences. According to Pleasants, additional characters and Play Sets will be released over the coming months.

Each Play Set offers a different story-driven experience as users are required to solve puzzles, battle enemies, and explore locations from all of Disney's properties. Moreover, playing these stories let users collect additional characters, vehicles, and gadgets to use in their own virtual world that is set within the Toy Box. Users can also share their

creations in Toy Box with friends, both within the online and offline realms.

As for Power Discs, they give gamers the opportunity to enhance and transform their experiences within the game. By placing either Circular or Hexagonal Power Discs on the Disney Infinity base, it allows them to unlock special powers, classic Disney gadgets, themes and vehicles.

The Disney Infinity Base, discs, and figures are now available for purchase at selected toy stores. Below are the prices:

- Starter Pack (with three Play Sets): RM249
- Play Set Pack: RM149
- Disney Infinity Figure: RM49
- Figure 3-Pack: RM129
- Power Disc Pack: RM29. 



STAY SHARP AND SAVVY

Uncompromisingly lightweight
yet professionally serious

Being on the road is no longer an option, it is a necessity. Sony knows this as it goes out of its way to produce a new Sony VAIO® notebook that is purposefully designed for the businessman who is always on-the-go. Known as the Sony VAIO® Pro Ultrabook™ Touch, it comes in two sizes - 11in and 13in - and is packed to the brim with all the tools and functions one would need to ensure a full productive day. Redefining the concept of an ultra-light work device, the new Sony VAIO® Pro 11/13 Ultrabook™ Touch is as superbly stylish as it is properly practical and exceptional in its performance.

Powered with the latest 4th generation Intel® Core™ processor, you need not compromise on performance for style any longer as Sony marries them together perfectly.

WORLD'S LIGHTEST*

Proving itself as the most lightweight Ultrabook™* available, concern for weight or having to bring around a clunky carrying case is a thing of the past. Once it is slipped it into daily briefcase or backpack of choice, it will come as to no surprise that one would not notice or may even forget that there is even a notebook stored within. Instead, there is now no more excuses to not take work on the road. Not only is it feather light, the new Sony VAIO® Pro 11/13 Ultrabook™* is also very good looking. So much so, you'd want to be spotted with the VAIO® Pro wherever you go.

STRONG LOOKS

Design wise, it is exceptionally distinctive. The chassis is expertly crafted with features that are decidedly stylish and smartly sleek. The tapered design tells the world that this is a no-nonsense Ultrabook™ and, in turn, its user is

very serious. Sporting carbon fibre for its build ensures the Sony VAIO® Pro 11/13 Ultrabook™ Touch is lightweight yet robustly tough. This gives it the versatility that many are demanding for out of their work device while staying on the run yet needing to remain updated with office work. The durability of the Sony VAIO® 11/13 Ultrabook™ Touch is further reinforced with the Hexa-shell scheme, which adds in a reinforced sturdier feel to the chassis.

INTUITIVE KEYBOARD

Beyond its durable design, Sony also made sure that the Sony VAIO® Pro 11/13 Ultrabook™ Touch also improves productivity of its user by using precisely engineered keys to create a comfortable typing experience. Augmenting this is the infinite palm rest that this Ultrabook™ sports, which is purposefully designed to taper off slightly so as to provide a comfortable place to rest your hands as you type. This, and the ambient lighting style backlight used, are made to ensure users can maximise their productivity for the longest period possible without any wrist strain occurring.



Ultrabook™ inspired by Intel

VAIO® Pro 11/13 Ultrabook Touch
powered by
4th generation Intel® Core™
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*VAIO® Pro 11 – the world's lightest 11.6" Ultrabook™, as at 5 June 2013.

*VAIO® Pro 13 – the world's lightest 13.3" Ultrabook™ Touch Panel Model, as at 5 June 2013.

Here's to Change

Distinction is the name of the game

There had been a lot of rumours about what the man that brought to life the super industrialist Tony Stark - Robert Downey Jr - would do when HTC signed him on to lead its upcoming global marketing campaign. Well speculate no more True Believers as HTC finally unveiled its CHANGE campaign, with Downey Jr spearheading the launch itself.

HTC kicked off a series of advertising creative revolving around the recently introduced #HTChange hashtag, featuring Downey Jr, the HTC brand, and its current range of smartphones. The 'Quietly Brilliant' moniker has now been changed to HTC - Bold, Authentic, and Playful.

The first phase of the CHANGE campaign features the playful side of HTC, as shown in the videos that showcases Downey Jr and his fellow actors playing around with the HTC initials. To get the general consumer in on the fun, the HTC Generator, which creates hysterical text combinations for the HTC initials, can be publicly accessed on the following URL: <http://www.htc.com/sea/go/what-is-htc/>.

Ben Ho, CMO of HTC shares: "With this campaign, we are affirming what HTC's role has now become in the mobile market, which is to define change and to lead the industry in developing the newest and most innovative technologies."


As a prelude to the new campaign, HTC recently announced its flagship smartphone, the HTC One, receiving a distinctive, new colour. Called Glamorous Red, it will be available exclusively to customers of HTC retailers. The new shade is supposed to truly reflect the blistering performance and premium features that have garnered global acclaim since it launched earlier this year. Indeed, the red chassis makes a striking yet sophisticated statement.

"We have always been committed to offering consumers the flexibility to share their personalities through their choice of smart devices, whether through colour, customisation or features. The new HTC One in Glamour Red showcases the power of our flagship model in a colour that demands attention, whilst maintaining the high standards set for sophisticated design and build quality," shares Philip Blair, President of EMEA, HTC.



Downey Jr (second from left) with fellow actors.

Sitting at the top of HTC's portfolio, the HTC One combines the latest in mobile innovation and design to offer the company's most powerful user experience to date. It seems appropriate that the new colour would make it stand out even more. With Blinkfeed, HTC Zoe, and BoomSound as well as the blazing fast performance it offers, it didn't look like HTC needed to do anything else to give it more zing. That is not until the red edition appeared.

Since its launch, the HTC One has attracted a host of editorial and industry awards which recognise its superior performance and benchmark design. Highlights include the GSMA's Global Mobile Award for Best New Mobile Device or Tablet at Mobile World Congress 2013 and Computex Taipei's Gold Medal in Design and Innovation. Now let's what other glamorous achievements can it garner with its chilli hot hue. 





CD, DVD,
BLU-RAY DISC



AN EPICENTRE OF HOME ENTERTAINMENT



USB FLASH
MEMORY



SET-TOP BOX

USB HARD
DISC DRIVE



ROUTER



DIGITAL CAMERA

Intelligence that is unmatched. Convenience unrivalled. And most of all, quality you can take pride in. The new Pioneer Blu-ray Home Theatre System is the new generation media hub in your living room. Its multi-connectivity features and multi-device support allow for a holistic home theatre experience.

Stream your favourite tunes from Internet radio or watch your favourite movies from an external hard-drive. Or even better, enjoy movies or tunes from your iPhone5. Indulge in all these features and more with the new Pioneer Blu-ray Home Theatre System because this new 360° entertainment experience just got better.

Also available in **Tallboy type** MCS-838/MCS-737/MCS-535 **Satellite type** MCS-434/MCS-333



TM's IPTV Services Go Nationwide

HyppTV is now available via Streamyx by noraisyah aziz




(From left) Datuk Che Azemi Haron, Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of Communications and Multimedia; Halim Shafie; Dato' Sri Ahmad Shabery Cheek, Minister of Communications and Multimedia; Tan Sri Dato' Sri Zamzamzairani Mohd Isa, Group CEO, TM; and Dato' Sharil Tarmizi, Chairman, Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission checking out the launch video as they officiated the event.

TM will be making its HyppTV services available to its new, as well as its existing, 4Mbps and 8Mbps Streamyx broadband customers from August 1 2013. This includes HyppTV Everywhere, an add-on service that they had launched a couple of months back, which enables its customers to watch HyppTV anywhere and everywhere through various mobile devices.

Dato' Sri Dr. Halim Shafie adds, "This is truly a big step forward for HyppTV in expanding its offering nationwide. By making the service available over TM's extensive broadband network as well as on multiple platforms through HyppTV Everywhere, shows how committed TM is to its customers. As the fastest growing IPTV service in the market, we have now enabled more Malaysian TV viewers to enjoy HyppTV's world class content. This is even if they are outside of the UNIFI coverage areas, come rain or shine."

As an introductory promotion, all UniFi and Streamyx customers get to enjoy the HyppTV Everywhere service on two devices for free from August 1 until September 30 2013. To download the HyppTV Everywhere application, customers can go to the Google Play Store or Apple Store and search for 'HyppTV Everywhere'.

For more information on HyppTV, log on to www.tm.com.my/hypptv or visit their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/hyppworld. 

Samsung Flips With Hennessy


Bringing back old school telephony via flip design

by calvin khong

Let's all take a look at the Asian smartphone market. It is easy to tell that flip phones are still trending. Guess which manufacturer is releasing one right now? Yes, the big blue electronic company called Samsung. This flip Android smartphone, called Samsung Hennessy (W789), does more than act as a product throwback as it essentially operates as a dual-screen smartphone.

Using a 3.3in display (320 x 480 pixels) and Android 4.1 operating system, the external screen uses a standard Samsung capacitive keyboard. When flipped open the internal screen comes paired with a 2x2 grid around a 4-way directional pad! Perfect for old school inputs. Hello T9 pad for text input!



Other specs include 1.2GHz quad-core processor, 1GB of RAM, 1,500mAh battery capacity, and a 5MP rear camera as well as a microSD card slot. There is also dual-SIM support that is able to operate with CDMA and GSM standards. It is currently set for a release in China with no dates and price being confirmed as yet. As of now, this phone is only meant for the Asian market. So, maybe Malaysia will be seeing it as well? We hope so. 





An event not to be missed... See you there!

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TECH TITAN

KASPERSKY Lab

Kaspersky Gives a Sneak Peek

New features shown in KAV 2014 and KIS 2014

by calvin khong

Kaspersky Lab, developer of secure content and threat manage solutions, organised a sneak peek into the latest edition of its soon-to-be-released flagship consumer products: Kaspersky Internet Security (KIS) 2014 Premium PC Protection and Kaspersky Anti-Virus (KAV) 2014 Essential PC Protection. Coming in with additional features and suites enhanced protection, the products are now integrated with ZETAShield technology, Trusted Application Mode, and improved Anti-Blocker functionality.

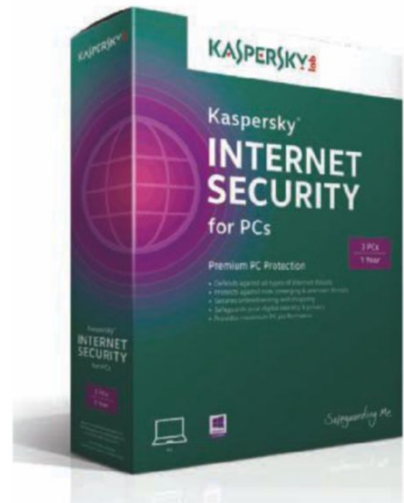
"We have forged partnerships with a solid number of global companies that share common values in developing a strategic platform that can address cyber-security issues while

strengthening our position as a leader in security solutions. We have collaborated with 80 global partners, including companies like Scuderia Ferrari, Qualcomm Technologies, Microsoft, IBM, D-Link and Facebook among others," says Harry Cheung, Managing Director of Kaspersky Lab APAC.

With such partnerships, the 2014 edition of the brand's flagship consumer product was purposefully developed to accommodate the growth in volume and complexity of threats targeting online financial transactions as well as preventing theft of personal data. These software are also optimised for Microsoft's new Windows 8 operating system. At press time, the products are going through its final round of beta testing.

The new features available on the flagship are as follow:

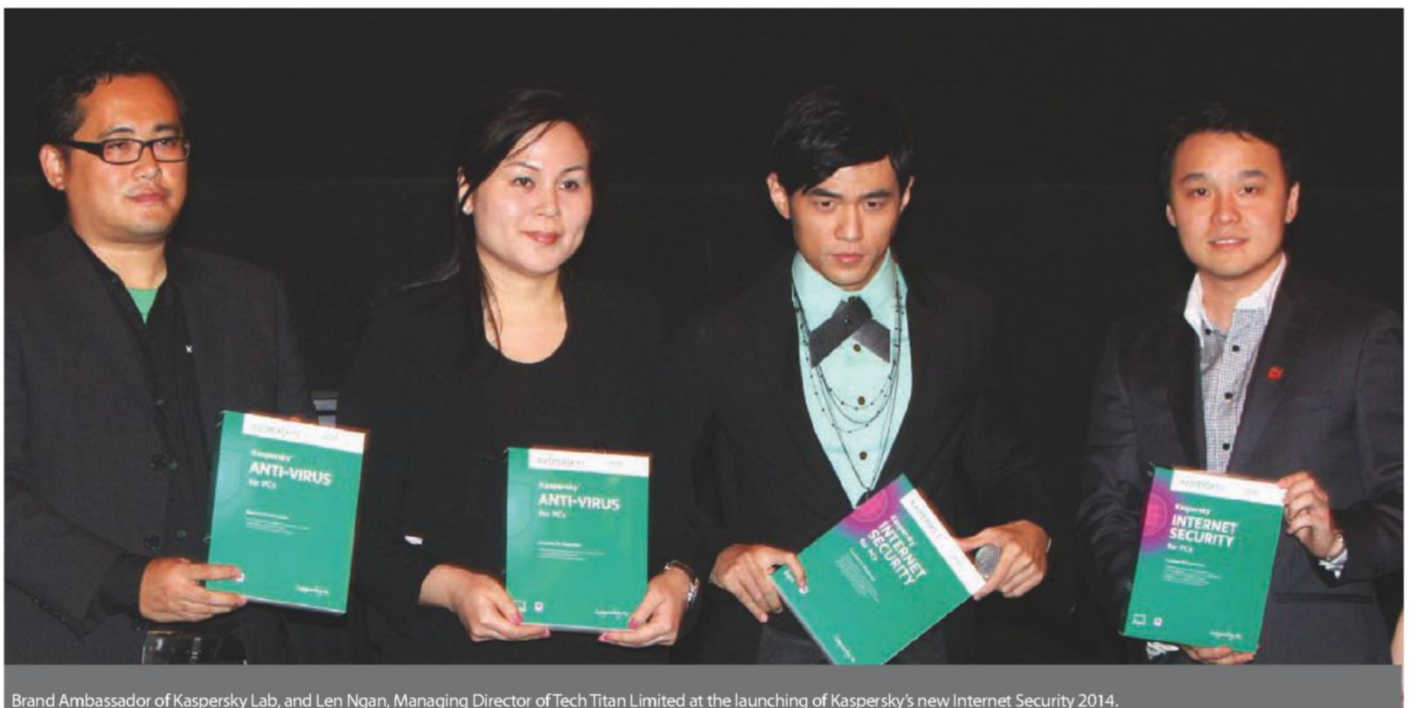
- Trusted application mode - this is used to authenticate legitimate applications
- Anti-Blocker - designed to unlock ransomware proactively with just the press of a certain key



- **ZETA Shield** - scans for data streams and malicious codes inside files that may harbour dangerous threats

Taiwanese pop singer, Jay Chou, who is also the Kaspersky ambassador, made an appearance to support the preview. According to Chou: "This is the first time I've endorsed an IT security product. As a loyal customer of Kaspersky Lab's products, I'm very glad to have been selected as its spokesperson and be here to show support for digital security, which is fast becoming a major issue in Malaysia. Malware isn't just disruptive to a user's online experience, it can lead to loss of confidential information and financial losses as well."

The sneak peek event also had Tech Titan, the developer of TECH TITAN Data Force 1 (USB ciphering and anti-virus dongle) present to showcase its encryption and protection services on USB MSC drives. All current Tech Titan devices that are powered by Kaspersky Lab are available nationwide, retailing at RM499. **PC**



Brand Ambassador of Kaspersky Lab, and Len Ngan, Managing Director of Tech Titan Limited at the launching of Kaspersky's new Internet Security 2014.



TECH TITAN

ULTIMATE USB ANTI-VIRUS



5 in 1

Includes
**Kaspersky®
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3 PCs
1 Year

TECH TITAN USB ANTI-VIRUS

A unique anti-virus solution specifically designed to be installed in and executed from USB flash drive. Powered by Kaspersky Lab, TECH TITAN USB Anti-Virus is the most powerful portable security solution that you can carry with you anywhere you go.

Key Features Highlights

- Privacy Protection
- Worry-Free Sharing
- Virus Hassle Free
- Protection on the Move
- File Synchronization
- Astrological Interface
- Performing in harmonious
- Automatic Updates

An **ordinary USB** and
a **protected USB**.
The **difference is BIG!**



Powered by **KASPERSKY®**

ULTIMATE ANTI-VIRUS PROTECTION

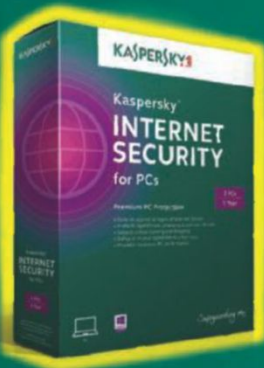
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Kaspersky Internet Security 2014 delivers premium PC protection from all Internet threats, and ensures the security of your identity and financial data while online banking and shopping ~ all without slowing down your PC.



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PC Fair Returns

New twist to an almost quarterly affair

The KL edition of PC Fair was, once again, held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. This time, it comes in a very different guise, shedding away some of its old character that it is known for. Now working with Digital Lifestyle Expo (DLE) and GoMobile Expo, this reinvigorated PC Fair is poised to retake its title as Malaysia's largest ICT event. Supplementing the event is the inaugural exposition the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) is organising as part of the DLE, which is where it will showcase a series of digital lifestyle technologies.

As part of the re-energised efforts, vendors from all over the ICT industry also put their best foot forward as they set-up in spiffy looking booths that have not graced the hallways of PC Fair in years. While the KLCC halls used are not as many as before as, only the five ground floors had been taken, the atmosphere feels different somehow. Less of the same old, same old and more of the new and highly innovative have showed up, spicing up the event again somewhat.

The marketplace has shrunk down to fit in the PC vendor booths and the MCMC expo as well, which means less of a messy and cluttered merchant area. The end result is an event that is cleaner, leaner, and more structured. It's definitely a welcomed relief from the usual.



Many of the visitors busied themselves with the new tech, services, and content being showcased, getting caught up with the haggling and bum-rushing for the best deals, and trying to figure out where the exit is. The highlight of the weekend were, of course, the Great PC Fair Hunt that PC.com organised with the support of Intel and PIKOM, the lucky draws that Intel was offering, and the booth babes. One must never forget the booth babes, scarce as they were at the PC Fair.


If anything, some fun were to be had during this PC Fair and it is easy to believe that things are looking up for this event. Let's hope it can only get better for them from here on out! **PC**



And The Best Booth Award Goes to...

The most coveted award in PC Fair has a winner

The PC.com Best Booth Award, previously awarded to HTC for its stylish military booth design at the first KL PC Fair, has found a new home. For its inaugural exposition and effort to showcase what Malaysia has to offer in terms of technologies and innovation for digital lifestyle, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) takes home the PC.com Best Booth Award for this PC Fair.

Beyond the sheer size of its booth space and the objective it has when it set out to organise this micro-event within PC Fair, MCMC has gone above and beyond what is considered necessary for it as it not only brought to the fore the efforts of 30 local app developers but also scheduled a feature packed weekend for event visitors as well. This includes industry workshop sessions, online quizzes, talent search competition, and the inaugural Broadband Empowered Entrepreneur Awards. 


(From left), Malini Ramalingam, Deputy Director, Digital Initiative Department/Digital Malaysia Division, MCMC, John Tay, Director, Digital Initiative Department/Digital Malaysia Division, MCMC, and Connor Tan, Business Development Manager, PC.com Magazine, showing off the Best Booth Award that MCMC received from PC.com Magazine



The Great Hunt Begins

The PC Fair maze now has hidden treasure

Wanting to add in some major fun to the humdrum that is PC Fair, PC.com Magazine, with the support of Intel Malaysia and PIKOM, organised an immersive and highly interactive treasure hunt during the PC Fair weekend. The entire hunt took place within the halls of PC Fair and required participants to run around the venue to look for clues that can help them answer the riddles that PC.com has come up with.

The response from event visitors were overwhelming and became the talk of the event as many raced to search for clues. Some even went as far as grouping up into large think tanks to figure out that one tricky question that was hindering them from finishing the PC.com Quest Forms. Winners of this Hunt will be announced soon on PC.com's Facebook page. 





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Iskandar Malaysia the Choice Location for Outsourcing

Outsourcing Malaysia to host APOS at Iskandar



Wong (third from left) together with the Asia-Pacific Outsourcing Summit (APOS) 2013 sponsors.

Outsourcing Malaysia (OM), an initiative under PIKOM, today announced that i2M Ventures Sdn Bhd (i2M), which focuses on strategic investment promotion initiatives for the Business Services sector in Iskandar Malaysia, will be the host sponsor for the Asia-Pacific Outsourcing Summit (APOS) at Iskandar Malaysia, between 21–24 October 2013.

One of the highlights of the summit will be the announcement of several key projects in the area that are set to escalate the outsourcing industry.

OM Chairman David Wong shares that development and enhancement of the outsourcing industry's value and positioning in the global marketplace is one of the key Entry Point Projects (EPP) identified by the government. In turn the local industry has an immense opportunity to serve growing regional and complex global markets through provisioning high-value services and

solutions. With both these pressures in place, Iskandar Malaysia has great potential to thrive in this industry.

"Malaysia has experienced significant growth in recent years despite the global economic downturn especially in Europe, since companies worldwide are focusing on opportunities to bring down costs by being effective, efficient and innovative," says Wong.

"The upcoming APOS, slated to be a major regional event, would focus on these stories and the near-term opportunities available in fast-growing markets. APOS concurrently establishes an undeniably cohesive link between outsourcing and economic development," he adds.

According to Wong, OM is excited to have i2M on board as the host sponsor for APOS. Indeed, this shows the government's serious take on efforts to drive Malaysia's outsourcing industry as a strong economic growth driver for the country and as a strategic enabler for value creation.

Zulfiqar Zainuddin, the Managing Director of i2M, a wholly-owned Khazanah Nasional Berhad (Khazanah) subsidiary, adds: "The APOS summit will be the perfect platform to share the key upcoming projects we have been working on for Iskandar Malaysia. This event will place Iskandar Malaysia in the limelight as a major potential hub for the region's outsourcing market."

Besides i2M, other sponsors include MSC Cyberport Sdn Bhd, Accenture, KPMG, VADS and Malaysian Data Center Alliance.

Wong says that although Malaysia has strong domain knowledge in sectors, such as Financial Services, Oil and Gas as well as logistics, the outsourcing industry has not reached its full potential.

"While the industry has been posting decent growth rates, there is a bigger potential for growth and we hope the hosting of a regional summit such as APOS will give the industry the much needed boost and exposure," adds Wong. 

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APAC Smartphone Sales on the Rise

Microsoft steps up its game as it snatched third place

According to a Gartner Inc report, Asia Pacific (APAC), Latin America and Eastern Europe exhibited the highest smartphone growth rates, reaching around 74.1%, 55.7% and 31.6% respectively, as smartphone sales grew in all regions.

Worldwide mobilephone sales to end-users totalled 435 million units in Q2 of 2013, which is an increase of 3.6% from the same period last year. As for worldwide smartphone sales, it reached 225 million units, up 46.5% from the same time period. Sales of feature phones, meanwhile, totalled 210 million units, which translates to a decline of 21% year-over-year.

"Smartphones accounted for 51.8% of mobilephone sales in Q2 of 2013, resulting in rate of sales surpassing feature phones for the first time," says Anshul Gupta, Principal Research Analyst at Gartner.

Based on the Gartner report, Samsung maintained its top position in the global smartphone market, as its share of smartphone sales amounted to 31.7%, up from 29.7% in the Q2 2012 (see Table 1). As for Apple, its sales have reached 32 million units for Q2 2013, up 10.2% from a year ago.



Table 1
Worldwide Smartphone Sales to End-Users by Vendor in 2Q13 (Thousands of Units)

Company	2Q13 Units	2Q13 Market Share (%)	2Q12 Units	2Q12 Market Share (%)
Samsung	71,380.9	31.7	45,603.8	29.7
Apple	31,899.7	14.2	28,935.0	18.8
LG Electronics	11,473.0	5.1	5,827.8	3.8
Lenovo	10,671.4	4.7	4,370.9	2.8
ZTE	9,687.6	4.3	6,331.4	4.1
Others	90,213.6	40.0	62,704.0	40.8
Total	225,326.2	100.0	153,772.9	100.0

Source: Gartner (August 2013)

In the smartphone operating system (OS) market (see Table 2), Microsoft overtook BlackBerry for the first time, taking the No. 3 spot with 3.3% market share during Q2 2013.

"While Microsoft has managed to increase share and volume for this quarter, it should continue to focus on growing interest with their app developers so as to help grow its appeal among users," says Gupta.

Android, meanwhile, continues to increase its lead, garnering 79% of the market for the same time period.

Table 2

Worldwide Smartphone Sales to End-Users by Operating System in 2Q13 (Thousands of Units)

Operating System	2Q13 Units	2Q13 Market Share (%)	2Q12 Units	2Q12 Market Share (%)
Android	177,898.2	79.0	98,664.0	64.2
iOS	31,899.7	14.2	28,935.0	18.8
Microsoft	7,407.6	3.3	4,039.1	2.6
BlackBerry	6,180.0	2.7	7,991.2	5.2
Bada	838.2	0.4	4,208.8	2.7
Symbian	630.8	0.3	9,071.5	5.9
Others	471.7	0.2	863.3	0.6
Total	225,326.2	100.0	153,772.9	100.0

Source: Gartner (August 2013)

Mobile Phone Vendor Perspective

To explore further what has gone on for each vendor, Gartner has broken down in detail as to what the market can expect from these industry players.

Samsung: Samsung remained in the No. 1 position in the overall mobilephone market with sales to end-users increasing by 19% in the second quarter of 2013 (see Table 3). "We noticed that demand in the premium smartphone market come mainly from the lower-end of this segment, which is within the US\$400-and-below average selling price (ASP) category. It will be critical for Samsung to step up its game in the mid-tier area and to also be more aggressive in emerging markets. Innovation cannot be limited to just high-end devices," notes Gupta.

Nokia: Slowing demand for feature phone sales across many markets worldwide and fierce competition in the smartphone segment

has really affected Nokia's mobilephone sales for Q2 2013. Nokia's overall sales totalled 61 million units, down from 83 million units a year ago. Even so, Nokia's Lumia sales grew 112.7% in the second quarter of 2013 thanks to its expanded Lumia portfolio, which now includes Lumia 520 and Lumia 720. "With the recent announcement of the Lumia 1020, Nokia has built a wide portfolio of devices at multiple price points, which should boost Lumia sales in the second half of 2013," adds Gupta. "However, Nokia is facing tough competition from Android devices, especially from regional and Chinese manufacturers, which are more aggressive in terms of price points."

Apple: While sales continue to grow for Apple, the company faced a significant drop in the ASP of its smartphones. Despite the iPhone 5 being the most popular model, its ASP declined to the lowest figure that Apple ever registered since the iPhone launch in 2007. The ASP reduction is due

to strong sales of the iPhone 4, which is sold at a strongly discounted price. "While Apple's ASP demonstrates the need for a new flagship model, it is risky for Apple to introduce a new lower-priced model too," Gupta shares. "Although the possible new lower-priced device may be priced similarly to the iPhone 4 at US\$300 to US\$400, the potential for cannibalisation will be much greater than what is seen today with the iPhone 4. Despite being seen as the less expensive sibling of the flagship product, it would represent a new device with the hype of the marketing associated with it."

Lenovo: Lenovo's mobilephone sales grew 60.6%, reaching 11 million units in Q2 2013. In fact, Lenovo's quarter performance was bolstered by smartphone sales as that grew by 144% year-over-year, helping it rise to the No. 4 spot for the global smartphone market for the first time. Lenovo continues to rely heavily on its home market in China, which represents more than 95% of its sales. It remains challenging for Lenovo to expand outside China as it has to strengthen its direct channel as well as its relationships with communications service providers.


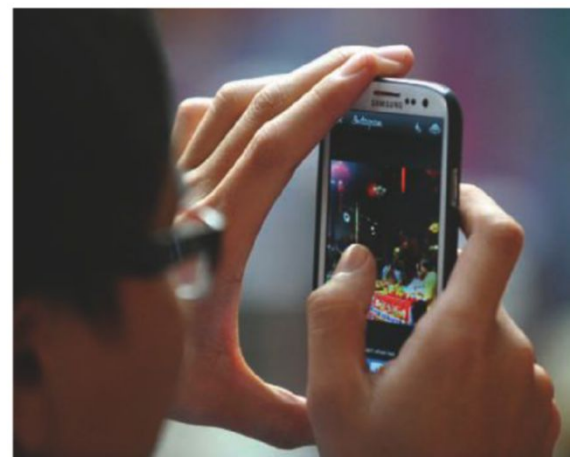
Gupta feels that with the second quarter of 2013 sales on track, there is little need to adjust expectations for worldwide mobilephone sales forecast, which is set to reach 1.82 billion units this year. Flagship devices brought to market in time for the holidays and the continued price reduction of smartphones will drive consumer adoption in the second half of the year." 

Table 3

Worldwide Mobile Phone Sales to End-Users by Vendor in 2Q13 (Thousands of Units)

Company	2Q13 Units	2Q13 Market Share (%)	2Q12 Units	2Q12 Market Share (%)
Samsung	107,526.0	24.7	90,432.1	21.5
Nokia	60,953.7	14.0	83,420.1	19.9
Apple	31,899.7	7.3	28,935.0	6.9
LG Electronics	17,016.4	3.9	14,345.4	3.4
ZTE	15,280.7	3.5	17,198.2	4.1
Huawei	11,275.1	2.6	10,894.2	2.6
Lenovo	10,954.8	2.5	6,821.7	1.6
TCL Communication	10,134.3	2.3	9,355.7	2.2
Sony Mobile Communications	9,504.7	2.2	7,346.8	1.7
Yulong	7,911.5	1.8	4,016.2	1.0
Others	152,701.5	35.1	147,354.60	35.1
Total	435,158.4	100.0	420,120.0	100.0

Source: Gartner (August 2013)



PS4 Goes to the West

Sony Announces PS4 Launch Dates



Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. (SCEI) recently announced that the PlayStation4 (PS4) will launch on November 15 2013 in the Canada and US. Europe, including Australia, New Zealand, Russia, and the United Kingdom, meanwhile, will see the PS4 rolling out to consumers on November 29 2013. On the same day, Sony's next-gen console will launch in Latin American as well.

The PS4 is a next generation computer entertainment system that redefines rich and immersive gameplay with powerful graphics and speed, deeply integrated social capabilities, and innovative second-screen features utilising devices, such as PlayStation Vita (PS Vita). SCE will continue to offer breakthrough gaming and entertainment experiences to users by


further enriching the services available on PS4, such as the PlayStation Network (PSN) and PlayStation Plus.

As part of this new digital initiative, PS4 will also support Twitch, a live internet streaming service devoted to video gaming, concurrently with the release of the system. Since its launch in 2011, Twitch has earned remarkable popularity worldwide as a live streaming video platform oriented towards video gaming, gathering more than 38 million visitors per month. PS4 users can easily broadcast their gameplay to their Twitch channel in real-time to gaming fans across the world, by simply hitting DUALSHOCK4 wireless controller's 'SHARE button'.

A total of 15 Blu-ray Disc titles that SCE Worldwide Studios (SCE WWS) and numerous software developers and publishers from around the globe developed will be released between the launch of PS4 until December 31. Combined with digital download titles, an astounding 33 titles will be available before the end of the year.

There are currently more than 180 PS4 titles in development. They include Destiny from Activision Publishers Inc/ Bungie, Inc, Diablo III from Blizzard Entertainment, Inc, Mad Max from Warner Bros Interactive Entertainment, Witcher 3 from CD Projekt, The Division from Ubisoft Entertainment, Dragon Age from Electronic Arts, as well as Shadow of the Beast, The Order: 1886, infamous: Second Son, Rime, Hell Divers, Everybody's Gone to The Rapture, and Resogun. This incredible line-up reflects the strong support for PS4 among virtually every software developer and publisher within the independent development community. Since June 2013, the number of developers joining the PS4 ecosystem has increased from nearly 500 to 620.

Adding to the fun, SCE will pre-install THE PLAYROOM in all PS4 systems. This new platform includes a tutorial session where users will be able to learn how to use various features of DUALSHOCK4 Wireless Controller, such as the touch pad and light bar. Those who also own a PlayStation Camera will be able to enjoy content within THE PLAYROOM as it utilises augmented reality technology, such as AR BOTS and PLAY WITH ASOBI, where users can engage with robot type characters displayed on the screen, and AR HOCKEY, an air hockey game where users can change the shape of the court by moving and rotating the DUALSHOCK 4 in different directions.

More details will come soon so do check back for updates on <http://www.liveatpc.com>. 

Game Title	Publisher	Genre	Release Format
NBA 2K14	2K Games	Sports Sim	Blu-ray Disc/ PS Store Digital Download
Call of Duty: Ghosts	Activision	First person shooter	Blu-ray Disc/ PS Store Digital Download
Skylanders Swap Force	Activision	Action Platformer	Blu-ray Disc
Need for Speed: Rivals	Electronic Arts Inc.	Racing	Blu-ray Disc/ PS Store Digital Download
Battlefield 4	Electronic Arts Inc.	First person shooter	Blu-ray Disc/ PS Store Digital Download
Madden 25	Electronic Arts Inc.	Sports Sim	Blu-ray Disc/ PS Store Digital Download
FIFA 14	Electronic Arts Inc.	Sports Sim	Blu-ray Disc/ PS Store Digital Download
NBA Live	Electronic Arts Inc.	Sports Sim	Blu-ray Disc/ PS Store Digital Download
Killzone: Shadow Fall	Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.	First person shooter	Blu-ray Disc/PS Store Digital Download
DRIVECLUB	Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.	Racing	Blu-ray Disc/ PS Store Digital Download
Knack	Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.	Action Platformer	Blu-ray Disc/ PS Store Digital Download
Assassins Creed Black Flag	Ubisoft Entertainment	Action Adventure	Blu-ray Disc/ PS Store Digital Download
Watch Dogs	Ubisoft Entertainment	Action Adventure	Blu-ray Disc/ PS Store Digital Download
Just Dance 2014	Ubisoft Entertainment	Music & Rhythm	Blu-ray Disc/ PS Store Digital Download
LEGO Marvel Superheroes	Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment	Action Platformer	Blu-ray Disc/ PS Store Digital Download

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Recycle with Acer Malaysia and Be Rewarded

Voluntary programme aims to encourage customers to recycle old hardware

Acer Malaysia, with its new recycling programme, is encouraging users of electronic items to properly dispose of their unwanted equipment by launching a Voluntary Take Back Programme. With this, anyone who wishes to dispose of their unwanted Acer machines have a means to recycle the items and in the process, be rewarded with trade-in vouchers that are worth up to RM200.

The environmental friendly service is open to all Acer users for one year, from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2014.

"Everybody has at least one gadget these days. Be it a smartphone, desktop, notebook or tablet, we inevitably will want to upgrade or would have experienced our machine reaching the end of its lifespan. We noticed that a number of people do not really know of an avenue to dispose of these machines properly. Thus, Acer Malaysia has decided to launch this Voluntary Take Back Programme to encourage responsible discarding of unwanted machines and not dumping them into the trash bin," says Ricky Tan, General Manager of Acer Sales & Services Sdn Bhd.

To spur users to be a part of this campaign, Acer came up with a tagline: 'Don't bin it. Bring it and get rewarded!' to aptly describes the

essence of its objective to protect the environment and drive its customers to bring their unwanted Acer machines to any appointed collection centre.

The Voluntary Take Back programme currently accepts working or non-working Acer notebooks, Ultrabooks, desktops PCs, all-in-one (AIO) desktops, netbooks, tablets, smartphones, projectors and monitors. Acer customers can then use the trade-in vouchers for their next purchase.


The following is the list of trade-in voucher values for qualifying unwanted Acer machines.

TRADE-IN MACHINE	TRADE-IN VOUCHER* VALUE	MINIMUM RECOMMENDED RETAIL PRICE FOR NEW ACER MACHINE
Notebook and Ultrabook™	RM200	RM1,000
Desktop PC (without monitor), all-in-one desktop and projector	RM150	RM750
Netbook, smartphone and tablet	RM100	RM500
Monitor	RM20**	RM100

* Terms & Conditions apply

** This voucher may be used independently or combined with the RM150 voucher for purchase of 1 (one) new Acer notebook or desktop PC only

"This Acer Voluntary Take Back Programme helps communities reduce waste. It is a meaningful effort to give Malaysians an option for disposing end-of-life Acer machines and contribute towards a clutter-free earth. Together we can make Earth clutter-free and it will also help decrease waste management and disposal costs for society," shares Tan.

Acer Malaysia is working through Highpoint Service Network, with an authorised agency to recycle and dispose the collected machines in an environmentally friendly manner. For more information on the Voluntary Take Back Program and the terms and conditions, please visit www.acer.com.my. 

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An Unordinary Keypad

New membrane concept provides perfect precision and comfort



Razer, known for its high performance gaming hardware, software and gaming systems, just announced the launch of the Razer Tartarus, a membrane gaming keypad that is designed with ergonomic comfort and infinite customisation options in mind.

As the successor to the widely popular Razer Nostromo, the Razer Tartarus, which is priced at US\$79.99 and is available since August, features an increasingly comfortable form factor and 25 programmable keys, including an eight-way directional thumbpad. The d-pad is purposefully made to allow gamers to move with more precision and provide additional add-ons, such as modifier keys, which can multiply the key-set count by eight, providing 128 different command options.

Offering unlimited macro lengths and unlimited game profiles, the Razer Tartarus also gives users instantaneous switching between eight key maps. To help improve the gaming experience even further, the new Razer gamepad features full anti-ghosting as well as backlit keys. This give users total control in dark conditions.

"The Razer Tartarus places an infinite amount of control into a single hand - literally - affording immense flexibility, power and a, ultimately, free other hand, which is a deadly competitive advantage," says Min-Liang Tan, Razer Co-Founder, CEO and Creative Director. "For serious gamers, this keypad can make the difference between victory and defeat."

Razer also further enabled the Tartarus to be configured with Razer Synapse 2.0, a proprietary software that functions as the

brain of the keypad. This system allows users of Razer products to save custom profiles and sync them from anywhere in the world, via the Cloud. This allow gamers to access their custom configuration from any computer anytime, anywhere.

Having an infinite number of commands at your fingertips, the Razer Tartarus is one of Razer's direct efforts to deliver absolute precision gaming, uncompromised control, blazing response speeds, and the ultimate comfort during extended gameplay. With the Razer Tartarus, there is absolutely nothing a gamer needs to worry about anymore, especially in terms of improving their performance.

For more information about twhe Razer Tartarus, do check out the following website: www.razerzone.com/tartarus. 



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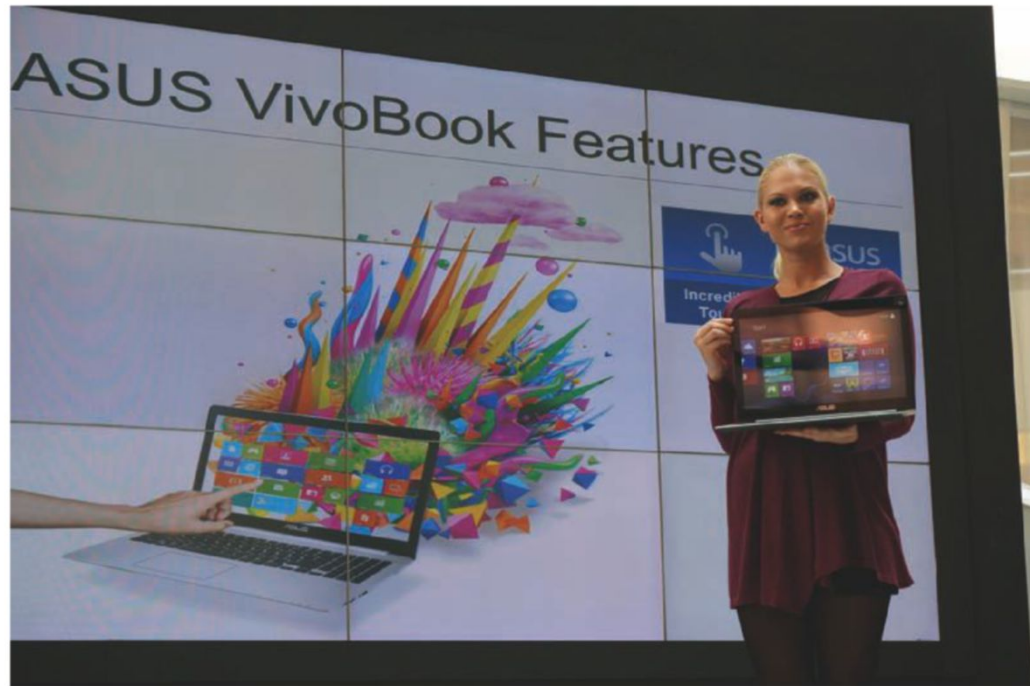
Unleashing an infinity of products by calvin khong

ASUS, in conjunction with its roadshow called We Transform in Klang Valley, unveiled several devices to suit different market segments. Also, there was a showcase preview of the PadFone Infinity as well as the introduction of a new 6in device. At the same event, the Taiwanese company even previewed the new Nexus 7 and how it is set to come out in mid-September.

"Our greatest motivation is to transform you, the consumers' expectation of technology in today's digital lifestyle. We are continuously striving for better transformation of innovations that are not only simple to use, but to help people realised their full potential," says Rex Lee, Regional Director, System Business Group, ASUS Southeast Asia.

Here are the products that were unveiled:

- **ASUS FonePad Note 6** - Part 3G Android smartphone and part tablet, this device comes with a 2.0GHz Intel Atom Z2580 dual-core processor and a full HD Super IPS+ display. Powering the audio is ASUS SonicMaster technology, which is paired with dual front speakers and Maxx Audio Wizard. It will be available in October 2013
- **ASUS VivoBook S551 Series** - With Windows 8, 4th generation Intel processor and NVIDIA GeForce GT740M packed within, this notebook has ample power for daily usage, like gaming and consuming multimedia. This notebook also sports an optical drive and six hours of battery life
- **ASUS MeMO Pad HD 7** - A quad-core processor lies within this upgraded MeMO Pad. On the front is a 1280 x 800 resolution IPS display. It also comes with the same enhanced audio features found on the FonePad Note 6. Additionally, the 7in tablet also has a 1.2MP front-facing camera and a 5MP rear camera
- **ASUS PadFone Infinity** - After a long wait, the third generation PadFone finally arrived onto Malaysian soil. As a 5in LTE smartphone with Qualcomm Snapdragon 600 quad-core processor, the Android 4.1 smartphone can be placed into a 10.1in display dock, turning it into a fully functional tablet
- **ASUS N550 Series** - Going for aluminium chassis, this notebook comes with a 4th generation Intel processor and a discrete NVIDIA GeForce graphics card, both of which ensure this notebook is able to support a proper gaming experience



As a follow up to the consumer event, ASUS also showed off two business class notebooks at another smaller media preview launch as well. According to Jimmy Lin, Country Manager of ASUS Malaysia: "At ASUS, it has been our ultimate objective to transform by meeting the consumers' needs and expectations in today's digital age. That's why IT professional all over the world choose ASUS as they know that our commercial notebooks are synonymous with quality and reliability."

The two business notebooks, both a first for the Taiwanese company, are:

- **ASUSPRO BU400** - As an Ultrabook, it has durability in mind. Using a hardy aluminium build and carbon fibre construction, it

protects the 3rd generation Intel Core processor and NVIDIA GeForce 5200 graphics card within. Its keyboard is spill-resistant as well and it even sports a reinforced security system, such as advanced facial recognition

- **ASUSPRO P Essential P45** - To support small- and medium-sized businesses, this notebook offers anti-glare display and a comfortable typing experience with its uniquely designed keyboard. Powering it is a 3rd generation Intel Core processor, which comes paired with the ASUS Super Hybrid Engine II. Working in tandem, it is able to, as the company claims, deliver up to 14 days of operational standby time. **PC**



(Third from left) Lee with the models showing off the new mobile devices from ASUS.

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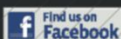
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Steve Ballmer Steps Down

by calvin khong

Another big blow to the technology industry

While the tech community are used to usual product announcements, a bomb just dropped on their laps last week. And it's not just any bomb as Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft, had announced his plans to step down from his current role in the Redmond office. Within 12 months, he will be leaving the giant company. The company's lead independent director, John Thompson, will oversee the search for his successor, heading a committee that will also include Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates.

Even as some have rightly predicted this, it is still truly a surprise for the ICT industry because it came only a month after the

Redmond-based behemoth announced a broad reorganisation that is designed to capitalise on the relentless shift towards mobile technology.

"There is never a perfect time for this type of transition but now is the right time. My original thoughts on timing would have had my retirement happen in the middle of our company's transformation to a devices and services company. We need a CEO who will be here for a longer term for this new direction," says Ballmer in his parting statement.

Despite the introduction of Windows 8 and its perceived success, some kinks are still present, arousing the ire of many long-time users. Even so, Ballmer plans to continue as one of the company's primary owners as he is currently the fifth largest shareholder. This translates to a 4% stake, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. All and all, Microsoft now has 12 months to look for a new CEO. Many believe that this will not be an easy search. **PC**

Ultra Size, Ultra Sony

World's slimmest smartphone with largest Full HD display in Malaysia



Sony Mobile Communication showcased its brand new Sony Xperia Z Ultra, which is a large-screen Android smartphone. Being the first smartphone in the world to use a Full HD Triluminos Display, the Z Ultra is also the first high display smartphone to be water-resistant.

"We are very excited to bring Xperia Z Ultra into Malaysia, just over a month after its global announcement. This device is specially designed for Asian consumers who are looking for a premium smartphone that offers an extraordinary viewing experience for a Full HD entertainment device. It is also for consumers who enjoy Sony entertainment and want to inverse themselves fully into the integrated mobile entertainment experience," says Jason Smith, Director of Marketing, Southeast Asia and Oceania, Sony Mobile Communications.

As you've already heard and read the reports all the way from S

display smartphone, it currently holds the title 'World's largest Full HD display smartphone'. Within is a Qualcomm Snapdragon 800 quad-core processor, which is clocked at 2.2GHz, the necessary high performance parts, and native 4G LTE support. The smartphone comes in a choice of black, white and purple at a recommended retail price of RM2,299.

Additionally, Sony's latest generation smartwatch, called Smartwatch 2 SW2, is also out. It can help users keep track of everything without the need to take out the smartphone out of the pocket or bag. Users can receive notification, connect with one-touch NFC, and control music directly from the watch. Currently, over 200 apps are available for the first generation and with an open API, new applications can be developed for SmartWatch 2. **PC**



(Third from left) Cheong Wah Tong, Head of Market, Malaysia, Sony Mobile Communications and Smith, showing off the newly launched Sony Xperia Z Ultra.

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MOVIES

LEISURE

HOTELS

PROPERTY

Triple Threat with Tab 3

Samsung shows off the latest rendition of its tablet family

Samsung Malaysia Electronics brought back the latest rendition of its popular tablet range, calling it the Samsung GALAXY Tab 3, which now comes in 7in, 8in and the 10.1in sizes. Offering an expanded line of options along with the previously announced 7in version, the GALAXY Tab 3 Series provides customers various ways to view, listen, create, and share content with people.

Here are some of the new key highlights that the new Samsung GALAXY tablets have to offer:

Samsung GALAXY Tab 3 (7in)

- Portability with one hand - Only 9.9mm thick and weighing in at 306g, it offers users a comfortable fit in the hand and even more portability for road warriors
- Powerful multimedia experience - The device's 1.2GHz dual-core processor is designed to offer a smoother user experience. With access to premium content on the Samsung Hub and WatchON, users now have a mobile entertainment hub to use




Samsung GALAXY Tab 3 (8in)

- Read while staying entertained - Designed to be held in one hand, the new GALAXY Tab 3 8in is what Samsung touts as 'the optimal device for viewing videos, playing enhanced games, and reading e-Books anytime, anywhere.' Featuring a slim bezel, it is designed to make full use of the screen via Samsung's "reading mode" technology. It optimises the display to deliver illumination and tone for comfortable paper-like readability in a variety of lighting conditions. Samsung's Sound Alive for Audio and Dolby Surround for Video Play, meanwhile, maximise every sound nuance played on the device, allowing users to hear clearer dialogue, consistent volume levels, and perfected audio performance, all of which enhances the overall multimedia experience
- Smart usability - With the new S Translator, it is able to provide translation through voice recognition and text on apps, including email, text message, and even ChatON. As for the S Travel feature, it provides



real-time local information that is essential for travelling. It even has plotted guides that can assist users with their travel paths. With it, they can get additional information of the location they are in as well as make reservations for places that are listed within the categories of the app. In terms of multimedia, the Story Album and Group Play give users more ways to share and consume their music, photos, documents, and games with those around them

Samsung GALAXY Tab 3 (10.1in)

- Amplified Multimedia Experience - As a 10in tablet, the GALAXY Tab 3 10.1in combines design and enhanced multimedia capabilities that are purposefully made for home and family use. Stacked with a 1.6 GHz dual-core processor, the tablet is suited for everyday use and multimedia consumption. Featuring a suite of video, music, and photo software, and coupled with its vivid display, the GALAXY Tab 3 10.1 is set to take centre stage as the portable home entertainment for any family
- For the Entire Family - Equipped with Smart Remote and MHL (TV Out) capabilities, the GALAXY Tab 3 10.1 transitions from gaming device for kids to home media control system for the parents. Whether streaming movies to the family television or playing games, the GALAXY Tab 3 10.1 integrates into the household media environment. 





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GADGETS

01



03



06

04



05



07



08



09



11



10





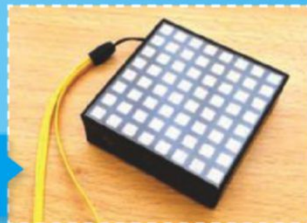
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- 01 TURTLECELL IPHONE CASE
- 02 TOMY DANCING FACE STAND
- 03 ARTIPHON INSTRUMENT 1
- 04 KREYOS METEOR
- 05 TOKYOFLASH KISAI INTOXICATED
- 06 SQUARE STAND
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- 24 J5 CREATE JUC400 WORMHOLE SWITCH

01



TURTLECELL IPHONE CASE

Bringing in the Batman's utility belt concept onto a smartphone case, 17 features retractable earbuds and a nice slim design so one need not worry about it adding more bulk to your phone's thin profile.

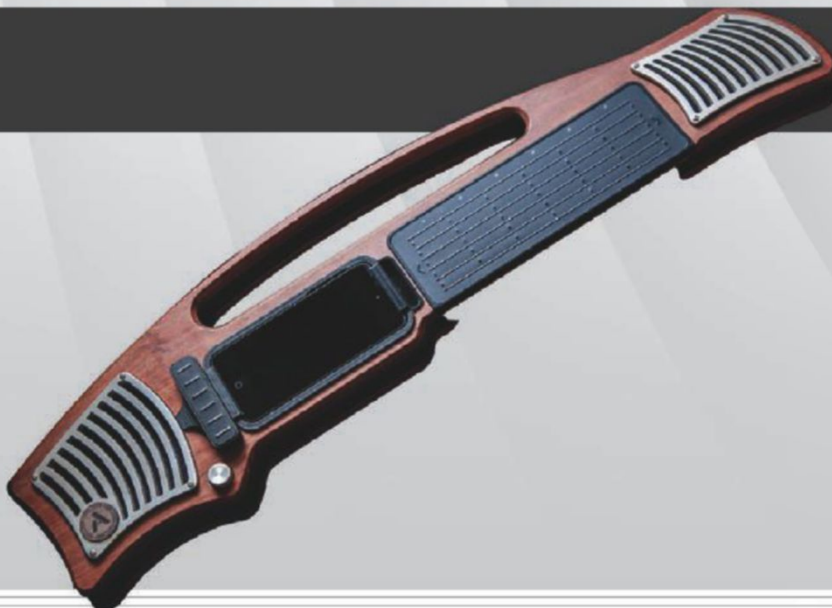
02

TOMY DANCING FACE STAND

So what is this half robot? In fact, what's the use of half of a robot? Simple, you can dock your phone in it. Even better, it boogies when you turn on your tunes. Yes, D-A-N-C-E.



03



ARTIPHON INSTRUMENT 1

How do you turn a smartphone into a great music tool? With Artiphon Instrument 1, of course. With it, you can transform yourself into a rock star or a suave jazz player. You decide.

04

KREYOS METEOR

There is now a trend for smartwatches thanks to the Pebble. Now, let's see the new generation, called Kreyos Meteor. Aside from pairing with smartphones, it has voice and gesture controls baked in!



05



TOKYOFASH KISAI INTOXICATED

Your smartwatch can tell you status updates? Let's put a real practicality in a watch. Kisai Intoxicated has a built in breathalyzer, allowing you to check the time and your blood alcohol level as well. No more drunk-driving.

06

SQUARE STAND

Remember the times when cash registers are big, bulky and intimidating? Not anymore. Consisting of an iPad stand with an integrated credit card reader, all you need to do is to set the stand on your counter and pair it with the Apple tablet.



07

MYO GESTURE CONTROL ARMBAND

Camera based gesture control? This one uses pure muscle. Worn around your forearm like an armband, the gadget uses proprietary muscle sensors and a six-axis motion sensor to track your movements.



08



ARMAGGEDDON STEALTH RAPTOR MKA-7

Explore a world of lightning fast response and addictive tactile feel with the Stealth Raptor. With it, you can experience total world domination at your fingertips.

09

EPIPHANY ONE PUCK

Here's a novel concept for a coaster. Instead of merely protecting your desk from your drinks, the puck-shaped contraption replenishes your phone's battery at the same time.



10

USB SQUIRMING TENTACLE

Tentacles as toys are always awesome. A Moving tentacle? Even better! How about more than one tentacle? Multiple fun! Just entertain yourself with a USB Squirming Tentacle. Get more, play more. Unleash the Kraken!

11

KOHLER MOXIE

If you enjoy listening to music, podcasts, the news, or audiobooks in the shower, mix it all up with the Kohler Moxie. Who says you can't listen to your tunes while showering?



12

NEXERSYS PRO

Bored of treadmills in the gym? Use this LCD touchscreen with an interactive coach and an animated sparring opponent to take you through a quick four-minute fighting session. Prepare for UFC!

13

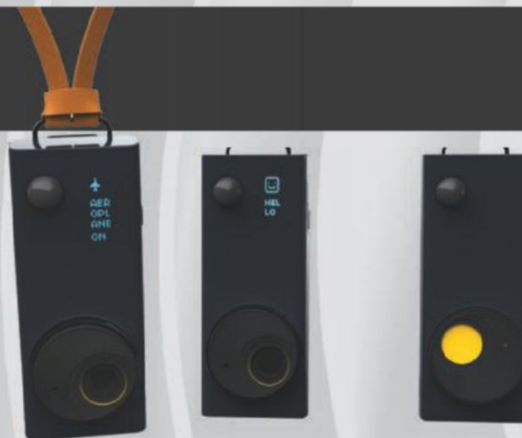
**1965 SHELBY GT 350 POOL TABLE**

Let's get this straight: there is no high tech stuff involved with this wonderful gadget. Just the sheer awesomeness of having a Shelby sports car and a pool table put together. Simply brilliant.

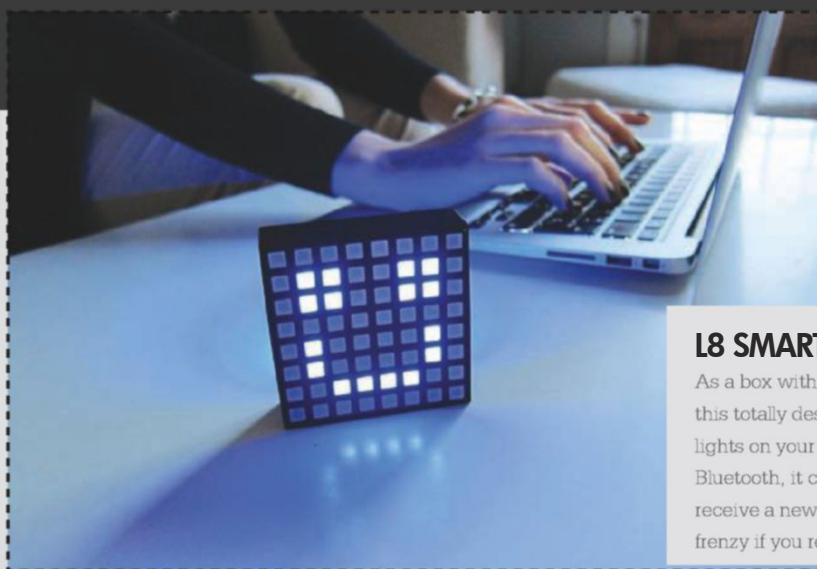
14

AUTOGRAPHER SMART CAMERA

Designed to hang from your neck, don't worry about missing great moments in life as the camera will take photos automatically. The sensors will alert the camera when it is very likely to come across a Kodak moment.

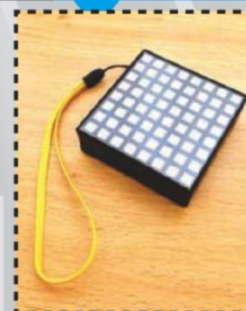


15



L8 SMARTLIGHT

As a box with an 8 x 8 matrix of LED panels, this totally destroys the tiny little notification lights on your smartphones. Paired via Bluetooth, it can display a Twitter logo if you receive a new DM or blink in an epileptic frenzy if you receive a call.



16

IPONG

Feeling the need to train your ping pong skills? Say hello to iPong. Its function is more intimidating than its name as it sends a barrage of high-speed shots for you to smash with your paddle.



17



ETON SOULRA

Still searching for an iPod speaker to play great soundtracks with your beach and poolside misadventures? You might want to consider the Eton Soulra, a ruggedized iPod speaker system that features solar-charging capabilities.

18

IPAD COMMODE CADDY

Time to replace the traditional basket of magazines with an iPad and a roll of toilet paper! Great for those who love to read in the toilet. Seal the deal!



19



ROMO

Welcome to the 21st century where your pets don't bite or scratch you. With it, your smartphone gets a fun and curious personality that learns and interacts with you and the world.





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- Queens Bay Mall Penang (shop-in-shop inside Borders)

1

DISCOVERY 3300 METAL DETECTOR

The Discovery 3300 helps you pinpoint exactly what you're looking for with its 1-touch "Zap" button, which allows you to eliminate other targets. It features a coin depth indicator (0 to 10in) and Squealch-Tech Noise Reduction Circuitry.



2

MARLEY FREEDOM EXODUS ON-EAR HEADPHONES

Crafted from bent wood, leather and recyclable aluminium; the Exodus is set to deliver an amazing and unique look. With its high-definition 40mm drivers and tuned enclosures, it'll take your music to a new level of clarity and realism.



4



FOLLOW ME ROBOT KIT

Build your own faithful friend with this cute sound-controlled Follow Me Robot. This unique robot pal reacts to voice/clapping sounds and will move towards it with a quick beep and a signal flash in its eyes.

5

CELESTRON DELUXE HANDHELD DIGITAL MICROSCOPE

This innovative microscope design allows you to view specimens or objects on a computer screen and lets you to take snapshot images or even short videos. A rugged, metal stand is included for holding the microscope steady at various positions.



6



J5 CREATE JUC400 WORMHOLE SWITCH

The JUC400 Wormhole Switch is a revolutionary product that takes away the barrier between multiple devices so it can work seamlessly together. This is achieved via the simple plug and play file swapping and content sharing system that it uses, which enables it to operate across multiple platforms.



I TESTED

REVIEWS BY

sharil abd rahman,
farhan gazi,
calvin khong,
victor yap



82 Nokia Lumia 925

WORKBENCH

The PC.com workbench is where all the gadgets, gear, and gizmos go to for our extensive testing. It is the play area where we abuse...erm...put the devices through the wringer. At the end of it all, the best of the best will receive the ever coveted PC.com Excellence, Choice, and Recommended awards. Read up to gear up!



EXCELLENCE:
Minimum score
9.5

Each month, only one device shall receive this award. It's the best of the best, the one and only, and the chosen one all wrapped into a neat package.



CHOICE AWARD:
Minimum score
8.5

This is only for devices that are outstanding in performance, features, and design.



RECOMMENDED:
Minimum score
7.5

Given to gear that rise above the average but yet still deserve recognition.

THE HOWS AND WHYS: METHOD TO THE MADNESS

Dozens of the latest (and quite possibly greatest) gadgets, devices and stolen alien technology arrive at our front door every month. We make it our mission to give you the most balanced opinion on just about every last one of them. It's only fair to both you - our dear esteemed readers, as well as the manufacturers who send us these awesome wonders. To ensure we mean business, we established a strict methodology to determine the final scores for each product category. Benchmarking software, from both FutureMark and PassMark, are our weapon of choice for putting computers to the test, while Quadrant Standard Edition is used to provide an objective score for mobile devices. For everything else, we hand it to our writers to determine the best qualities of whatever it is that fall into our hands.



78
Samsung
GALAXY S4 Active

97
Acer
'13



76
Sony 65in
KD-X9004A 4K LED TV



V

VALUE

Expensive does not always mean good.

P

PERFORMANCE

A measure of how well the product stands up to our testing.

F

FEATURES

The best gimmicks and flashy parts get the top score

D

DESIGN

Aesthetics are important. The nicer it looks, the more points it gets.

U

USABILITY

In the end, we just want our gadgets to work. So those that are best for day-to-day tasks are valued higher.



| TESTED

Tiny Successor

by victor yap

Sony 65in KD-X9004A 4K LED TV

SCORE



9.6



• RM23,999

Since the launch of 4K TVs, there has been a lot of buzz of wanting to purchase this new TV tech. However it has been high accessible for many... until Sony has introduced the more compact version of its 84in flagship. Coming in at 65in and 55in, I had been totally enamoured with the new TVs during the local media preview launch that I immediately asked for a review session with the biggest in the show floor. Obviously I wanted to take the 65in for a spin.

SLIMMED DOWN

I'm not sure how Sony managed it but it seemed to have not only down-sized its 4K monster of a TV by nearly 30%, the new 65in somehow looked like it had a slimmer chassis. The telling signs

are the almost-nothing-there bezel, the smaller base stand, and flatter than flat in-built speakers. I like the fact how this 65in 4K TV felt like it took the Monolithic design used in previous Bravia flagships and made it its own with additional tweaks and enhancements. Sony calls it the 'Sense of Quartz' design. It's pretty cool to make believe that the TV is somehow floating over its base stand when it is properly secured to it. That's how far and intuitive the chassis design has gone to make the new 4K TV distinctively unique.

TWO MAN EFFORT

According to the trainer that Sony assigned for the launch preview, it'd take about two average guys who have able backs to put the 65in X-Series TV together. Quickly securing four screws at the base, plugging in the necessary cables, and it is all set to blow your mind away. The estimated time to set it all up is 10

minutes, give or take. It'll take longer if a VESA wall-mount is used. Taking it down is another story altogether. Once it is all set up, you'd need a minute or two to not only catch your breath but to also admire your hard work. I kid you not when I say that Sony's new 4K 65in TV, with its polished to a gleaming sheen ebony black chassis, is a true work of art and would fit in any art exposition.

VIVID PALETTE

The colours of the Sony 65in KD-X9004A 4K LED TV are beyond exceptional. Primary colours really stood out with every possible hue imaginable coming to life on the 4K screen. I'll admit, I was mesmerised by it all. The blacks are impossibly deep, the reds are near ruby like, the blues sparkle, and, for the first time in a long while, the whites are blinding but in a good way. I never saw anything like it. This is due to the Triluminos Display that the new 65in 4K TV uses. Mind you, such high performance is only achievable with native 4K content, which is something Sony has currently designated for its showroom video demos.



YOUTUBE WONDER


The closest I ever got for content of similar quality is on YouTube. Of all places! Apparently some videos on YouTube have been recorded on native 4K equipment and the video streaming website apparently is able to play 4K content properly, provided there is any 4K screens to begin with. How could I ever pass up that opportunity with this 65in wonder! KPOP music videos (KARA's Pandora and After School's First Love to name a few) dominated my list of test videos used on the 65in 4K TV, followed closely by 4K game trailers, and Sony's upcoming 'Remastered in 4K' Blu-rays, specifically Total Recall and The Amazing Spiderman. Drowned in colour is totally an understatement!

TRUE TV CINEMATIC EXPERIENCE

Having tried a few action scenes on both Total Recall and The Amazing Spiderman, it is easy to tell that the refresh rate and cinematic function of the Sony 65in KD-X9004A 4K LED TV is top notch. Sit close enough and you'd feel as if the 65in would swallow you whole, engulf you within the movie that is being played on it, and transport you to another realm of interactive experience. The 3D glasses (four in total) that

come bundle with the 65in 4K TV does offer some semblance of a 3D experience when it is used properly. One can expect things to jump out at you while you're caught up in the movie. The cinema effect, especially when both are activated for visual and sound, totally transforms the user experience on so many levels.

BIG SOUND

Complementing the visual performance of the Sony 4K 65in LED TV is the big sound the in-built speakers are able to produce. Using an end-to-end Sony audio solution, the speakers use proprietary Magnetic Fluid Speaker technology, which help deliver sound pressure levels that are higher than what normal TV speakers produce. In English that means better and clearer sound reproduction that has over-the-top sound fidelity. This applies to the main tweeters, super-tweeters, and sub-woofers, which ensures that, even at high volumes, there is simply no sound distortion whatsoever. Of course, the source has to be of high quality to begin with so definitely no low quality music files if at all possible. 

SONY 65IN KD-X9004A 4K LED TV

Screen Size 65in
Backlight Type Edge LED
Picture Engine 4K X-Reality PRO with Triluminos Display
Dynamic Contrast Ratio Over 1 million
Display Resolution 4K (3840 x 2160)
Aspect Ratio 16:9
MotionFlow XR 800MHz / XR 960MHz
Audio Power Output
12.5W+12.5W+20W+20W

VERDICT

Eye-popping!



Tougher S4

Samsung GALAXY S4 Active by calvin khong

SCORE



8.8



Considering how much we love to carry our smartphone around, it is one of the most fragile

technology is advancing but this is all inside. What about the outside? The shell that protects

release yet another variant for its S4. If the flagship is Papa Bear, then Samsung GALAXY S4 Active is the Outgoing Uncle. Remember, this



BUTTON-FUL JOURNEY

Visually, the S4 Active still uses Samsung's flagship smartphone's pebble shape. The only recipe change here is by taking out the glossy plastic and replacing it with a more industrialised material. Another obvious change is its settings and back keys. Those are no longer capacitive but fully functional buttons. Hey, the Home button finally has high rise neighbours! Not that I applaud the move but it is something different from the usual Samsung premium devices.

SAY STRENGTH

When it comes to toughness, Samsung opted for a bulkier build unlike the classy design that Sony opted for. Thanks to this, it does feel like it's meant to be tough. Sort of. At least, I can say the

I like the heft but fans of lightweight devices will disagree with me. Interestingly, I can remove the backplate to reveal a battery and slots to put in my microSIM card and microSD card. By the way, the backplate looks textured but this is just a deco. Way to go in fooling me! To further add a sense of solidity, each back corner of the phone is fitted with a visible screw.

BLURP BLURP

Aside from spewing out fancy words all over advertisements, there is also an IP67 rating that denotes a certain level of water and dust resistance. People looked at me and pointed to the opened audio jack but don't worry, it is completely sealed off without the need for a flap like the microUSB slot. Dunking a pail

of water onto the S4 Active is an interesting experience. In all honesty, I've never expected a Samsung phone to withstand any underwater/splash situation. This one does and handles the challenge very well. Even after going for a quick swim in the pool, the innards stay dry.

CONTRAST NO MORE

After taking Samsung's Super AMOLED screen for granted, I am starting to miss it. The reason being the S4 Active uses an LCD display. Mercifully, the difference can only be seen when in the dark as the backlight becomes visible in the dark. Even the quality of colours suffered quite a bit, showing less vibrancy and the easy to notice stark difference in contrast when

compared to the S4. Don't get me wrong, I am not saying the screen is bad. It is probably still one of the better displays you can find in the market. Just don't expect extremely top notch displays like HTC One or Samsung GALAXY S4.

STILL GIMMICKS

Whenever I see TouchWiz skin on top of the delicious vanilla Android 4.2, I shudder. Samsung reworked the whole Android OS until the point whereby seasoned Android users need some time to get their bearings right. Here's the hard truth, the tweaks and additional features added on are just gimmicks. Some work and while others just don't have any real-life application. For one, I can appreciate the Smart Stay function, which keeps the screen on as long as I am looking at it. However, I find Air View pointless as it is very counter intuitive. I rather touch the display than hover my finger above it.

HANDLES EVERYTHING

Sorry guys, no octa-core processor in it as the S4 Active uses a 1.9GHz quad-core processor. Then again, the difference between those configurations doesn't really affect the phone's performance. Currently, with such a powerful processor inside, I see no reason for it to lag. Games, multitasking and internet browsing are a breeze for the S4 Active. Keeping the phone alive is a battery capacity of 2,600mAh. Under normal usage, it can last the whole day with some juice left to spare before charging it. For a power user like me, who constantly stream videos and play games, I consider my portable battery charger to be my best friend.

UNDERWATER SHOT

Reducing the camera pixel count from 13MP to 8MP is totally fine with me. Of course pictures look less sharp when it is being blown up



but how often do people do that? For camera shooters, as long as it is clear and sharp in my computer, the performance is already good. Thankfully, the S4 Active can do it. Just take note that the dynamic range is lower making background scenes less lively. What's interesting here is the Aqua mode, which is used for underwater photography. Normally, a smartphone touch display will not function when it is down under a swimming pool. The Aqua mode turns the volume buttons to the camera or record button, which is a brilliant move. **PC**



SAMSUNG GALAXY S4 ACTIVE

Dimension 139.7 x 71.3 x 9.1 mm

Weight 153 g

Processor Quad-core 1.9GHz

Qualcomm Snapdragon 600

Display 5in LCD, 1920 x 1080 pixels

Memory 2GB of RAM

Storage 16GB, microSD up to 64GB

Graphics Adreno 320

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean

Camera 8MP rear, 2MP

Battery 2,600mAh

Quadrant 12,015

Antutu 22,810

VERDICT

I prefer this over Samsung GALAXY S4.





| TESTED



SCORE



8.0

Almost

BlackBerry Q5 by calvin khong

So, we have seen BlackBerry putting a fight in the high-end market with 710 and Q10. What about

and it goes by the name BlackBerry Q5. Planning to find a place for the QWERTY keyboard in the masses, this should make things interesting as the market is saturated with touchscreen devices. Will QWERTY be cool again? Make way!

ALL BUSINESS

Seems that BlackBerry is going old school with the Q5 as it reminds me a lot of the old Bold series. Sure the smartphone now comes in more colours but this doesn't help the fact that it is still boring. It doesn't carry the same attention-grabbing skills as the company's flagship product. The QWERTY keyboard placement is still the same and the only thing that come into mind is 'all business and no play'. The same cannot be said for its all plastic build. While it feels cheap, thankfully it is sturdy.

STICK TO WORK

Aside from the keyboard dominating the front, there is also the 3.1in display that sports a 720 x 720 resolution screen. Yes, it is a very square-ish panel instead of the rectangular slab users are accustomed to. By looking at this front face setup, I feel that viewing content on this can be outright weird. There is need to scroll more when

browsing through websites. Watching movies are more awkward as I have to do so in portrait mode instead of landscape. My advice: skip the movies and focus on just working. Seriously.

MORE UPDATES

Powering the device is a 1.2GHz dual-core processor, which is a step down from the Q10's 1.5GHz dual-core CPU offering. However, the difference doesn't show as much. Sure, performance stutters are more apparent but it is negligible given the cheaper price tag. I will not dive into the BlackBerry operating system (OS) as it is essentially the same with the usual pros and cons. However, I do hope that the company will release a steady flow of updates as the OS needs some refinements. Remember, software optimisation!

RELIABLE PARTNER

Coming into the most important feature, which is the keyboard, I will admit that I am very clumsy with it. Albeit, I got used to it very fast. Of course, I do prefer the Q10's keyboard compared to the Q5's isolated layout of its keys. Nonetheless, the typing experience is a real pleasure for me. It is firm and responsive, giving me a very reassuring click whenever I press it. While I am not a fan of the QWERTY as I have been spoiled by touchscreen keyboards, I can definitely live with this.

BLACKBERRY Q5

Dimensions 120 x 66 x 10.8 mm
Weight 120g
Display 3.1 IPS LCD, 720 x 720 pixels
Processor 1.2GHz dual-core
Memory 2GB of RAM
Storage 8GB, microSD up to 32GB
OS BlackBerry 10
Camera 5MP rear, 2MP front-facing
Battery 2,180mAh

VERDICT

Decent hardware but in need of more refined software.



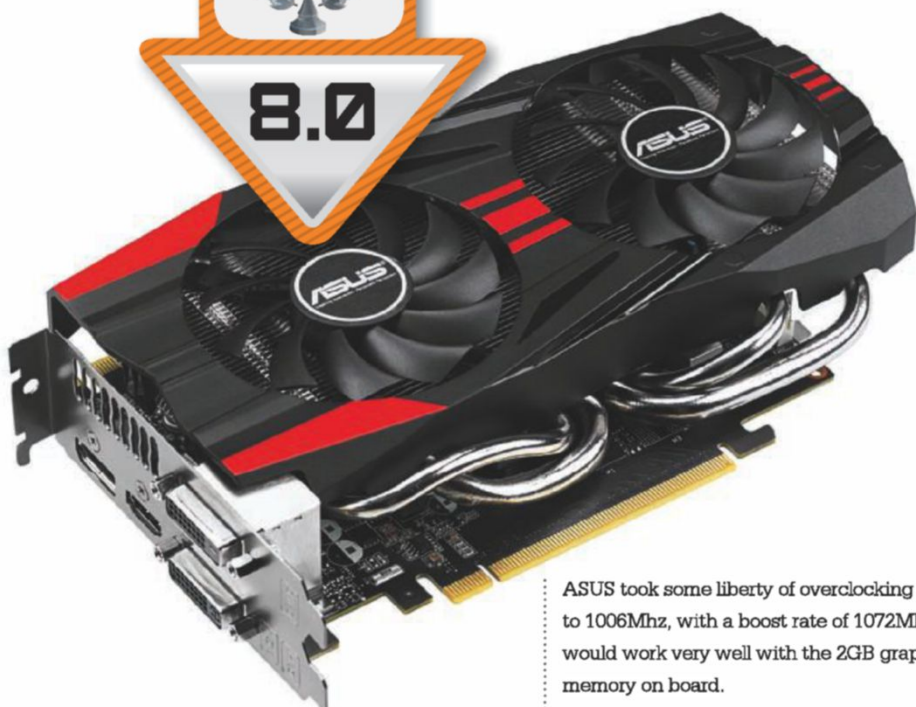
SCORE



8.0

Best Mid-Ranger

ASUS GeForce GTX760 DirectCU II OC by din



It's been awhile since NVIDIA has shown its hand. The last time this happened, the awesome and really powerful Titan came out. Then the GTX780 series came along. Those two are some of the best cards you can get in the market today. But that sort of performance also comes with a price, something that not everyone can afford. Hence many (yours truly included) waited for something that is more affordable to come out of the woodwork. And we are not dissatisfied with the introduction of the GTX760. What came into the PC.com lab for us to review is the DirectCU II OC version. Joy!

GREAT UPDATES

So what's with the long name? As with every ASUS graphic card, it uses its own proprietary heatsink solution, hence the DirectCU naming convention. This large cooler is, as ASUS claims, able to lower temperature by 20%, as well as provide sufficient silent running. Not only that, the card is already overclocked, which would explain the OC at the back. While it's a new card, the GTX670 is an updated version of the Kepler GPU, which means this graphic card is more in common with the GTX670 and GTX680 if compared to the Titan or GTX780. As such, it is easy to guess that the GK104 GPU is based upon the 28nm architecture, with a TDP of around 150 watts and having the basic support for PCI Express 3.0, which offers fast communication between the card and motherboard controller.

ASUS took some liberty of overclocking the card to 1006Mhz, with a boost rate of 1072Mhz, which would work very well with the 2GB graphic memory on board.

The box it comes in is rather small and light. As we suspected, it only contained the bare necessities. Beyond the card, there is the driver CD and cables. Interestingly, the GTX670 uses a single 8-pin PCI-E power connector yet also includes an adapter for PSUs that only provide the 6-pin type. Honestly, I expected something more. Even a DVI to VGA connector would do. But then again, with such mere packaging, it means the card can be sold at a lower price, which is something that could make or break a buyer's decision.

POWERED PERFORMANCE

The output is the same as with any new NVIDIA card, offering two Dual Link DVI, a single HDMI and a single Display Port as connectivity options. When used together, you can use a 3+1 monitor configuration. It can pair up with two other cards to triple-SLI mode if you need some more grunt. With its native DirectX 11 support, you can definitely run any new game that has come out over the last few months. For reviewing this card, the lab rig had the ASUS Maximus GENE motherboard paired with an Intel 4770K CPU as well as 4GB of RAM and Windows 8 Pro. With the performance ratings I got, I can say with all honesty that I am not dissatisfied. The card rendered Grid 2 graphic test with ease, maintaining 70 to 80FPS on average while set to maximum performance. It even manage to

run Battlefield 3 on high with total ease. In terms

8506 score on the Graphics test, 6913 for Physics and 6595 on the combined rating. If you need a powerful card that won't eat into your budget, this is the card for you. **PC**

ASUS GEFORCE GTX760 DIRECTCU II OC

Dimensions (WxHxD)

21.84 x 12.7 x 3.81mm

Chipset Nvidia GTX760

Bus Standard PCI Express 3.0

Video Memory GDDR5 2GB

Engine Clock

1006 (Base), 1072MHz (Boost)

CUDA Core 1152

Memory Clock 6008MHz (GDDR5)

Memory Interface 256-bit

Expansion

2 x DVI, 1 x HDMI, 1 x DisplayPort

3DMark 11

Graphics Score 8506

Physics Score 6913

Combined Score 6595

VERDICT

Power without breaking the bank.





| TESTED



9.4



Perfect Mix

by calvin khong



Fine, although I personally feel that the Lumia 920 is the perfect phone for me, many people disagree. One main issue they seem to dwell on is the weight and bulk. Thankfully, Nokia listened and came out with the Lumia 925. Now, this is not a replacement. It is moving in parallel with the bulkier one. However, is this the perfected formula? The one and only top notch Windows

unleashed it so here's where you get your answers.

STEALTH BOMBER

Take note that the buzzword of the day when using this smartphone is 'aluminium'. Nokia throws it everywhere and people are whispering, if not shouting, about it from one end of the world to the other. If the Lumia 920 is a tank, then the Lumia 925 is a stealth bomber. With this new chassis, I have to bid a tearful farewell to my favourite weight and bulk. The metal-accents, which also works as its antenna, does look very slim and lightweight. It is classier and more premium. This is even more apparent when I

hold it. One-handed usage is definitely possible with this design. The sacrifice? No wireless

this optional feature is sold separately.

STANDARD ISSUE

What can I say about its screen? Wait, there is one change: from IPS LCD to AMOLED. This is also another factor that helps the smartphone slim down. Apart from this, the usual PureMotion HD+ is used to reduce latency on animation. Technicality aside, I like the display. Colours look alive, leaving very little room for me to complain. It is pretty much standard issue on most of Nokia Lumia's premium line and this includes the Lumia 1020. An added bonus is the ability to use the Lumia 925 with gloves on.

RIGHT RECIPE

Featuring the same 1.5GHz dual-core

as its bulkier sibling. When I compare this processor with other high-end smartphones out there, it may seem outdated. However, there is no need to worry about the device's performance. It is still as smooth as an iPhone 5 or a HTC One. Whatever task I do with the Lumia 925, it always feels speedy and exceptionally lag-free, be it switching between apps or playing games.

LIFE IMPROVEMENT

One major concern about every smartphone is battery life. Other manufacturers opted for bigger battery sizes to counter this. Nokia, unlike the rest of the market, relies on phone optimisation

instead. While it will not break new barriers, I can say the Lumia 925 lasts longer than the Lumia 920. With the brightness set at medium, playing games and browsing the web, the WP8 device managed to last half the day. Take note, I did leave the phone on standby mode when not using it. Let's just say I am satisfied with the battery life. Seeing that I have used the smartphone for a long while on a single charge, I don't ever see the need to recharge it until I reach home.

CONSIDER THIS

Several Lumia smartphones later, the word 'camera phone' seems to have officially gone to Nokia. Equipped with an 8.7MP PureView camera, it is basically the same one found on the Lumia 920 but with an extra lens, giving a total of six lenses being used. Here's the thing, I love Nokia's image quality but it seemed to have remained the same. I can barely find any difference between the two phones, which has made me doubt about the 'improved' part that I read in the press release. Don't get me wrong, this camera still outperforms many smartphones out there with great clarity, colours and in low light conditions. Adding one more feature to the camera is Nokia Smart Cam, which lets me shoot up to 10 pictures with the press of a button. There are certainly a lot more options for editing and manipulating photos. The **ONLY** thing I wish present is a HDR mode. Seriously, Nokia, please consider it.

AMBER FORMULA

Speaking of its Smart Cam, the forthcoming Amber update for the rest of the Lumia smartphones is upon us as the Lumia 925 already has that pre-installed. So how does it feel like to be using the latest OS update? Very smooth. The homescreen and app menu scrolls fluidly without a hitch. Personally, up until now, I've always

experience very little lag with a WP8 device. Also, when it comes down to software, I have to admit that Nokia's HERE Maps and HERE Drive+ are still the brand's better selling points. Bonus for me is being able to use the new LiveSight, which acts like a combination of City Lens and Maps. All of these apps are available now, finally addressing the issue of long ago (is it that long?) when people still complained about the lack of apps for Nokia's ecosystem. The pool is now quickly filling up with more interesting apps and games.

HARDWARE BRILLIANCE

For the general users out there, I will say Nokia nailed it in terms of smartphone design. It is something people will love to hold and show off. It helps that the hardware is amazing and the camera used within is pushed beyond its design threshold. It is a testament that large megapixel count is not everything and that quality pictures can be produced if a company really puts real effort into it. Sad to say there is one brutally honest fact: I don't see any improvement in the OS. Nokia is not to be blame for this since Microsoft is the one behind this problem. If users were to look at all WP8 devices, there aren't a lot of updates to fine tune the OS. While there is the Amber update that Nokia made available but it only improves the Nokia aspects of the Lumia

not have similar hardware or system updates? This is for everyone to ponder on and to remind **Microsoft that the issue of innovation for WP8 isn't over.** **PC**



NOKIA LUMIA 925

Dimension 129 x 70.6 x 8.5 mm
Weight 139g
Display 4.5in AMOLED PureMotion HD+, 1280 x 768 pixels
Processor 1.5GHz dual-core Snapdragon S4
GPU Adreno 225
Memory 1GB of RAM
Storage 16GB/32GB, no microSD
OS Windows Phone 8
Connectivity Bluetooth, FM Radio, microUSB, earphone jack, Wi-Fi, GPS, Compass, NFC
Battery 2000mAh

VERDICT

Nokia nailed the perfect Windows Phone 8 design.





| TESTED

SCORE



8.6



The Mash Up

Samsung GALAXY S4 zoom

by noraisyah aziz

SAMSUNG GALAXY S4 ZOOM

Dimensions 125.5 x 63.5 x 15.4 mm

Weight 208 g

Processor Dual Core 1.5GHz

Display 2.4in LCD

Operating System Android (4.2)

TouchWiz Nature UX UI

Connectivity HSPA+ 21Mbps / 5.76Mbps (850 / 900 / 1,900 / 2,100MHz)

Camera Rear camera 16MP with Xenon Flash Front-facing camera 1.9MP

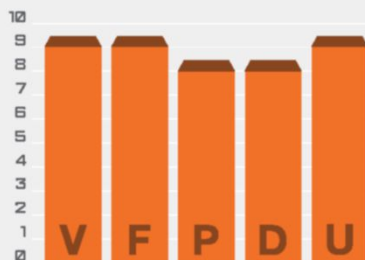
Connectors Micro USB, microSD External Memory Slot, 3.5mm ear-jack

Battery 2,330mAh

Antutu 9857

VERDICT

For those who wish to make calls with their camera.



As we are all aware, Samsung is trying very hard to woo every single market with its line-up of products. With that in mind, the Korean company introduced the GALAXY S4 zoom. The moment I got it, I immediately volunteered to review this device. Well, to be frank, it is not because I think it is a revolutionary device. I just need a camera for my Hari Raya celebration. Thanks to this smart device, my Raya moments had been fantastic. Read on.

PLAIN AWKWARDNESS

For me, Samsung has not been that creative (not even close) when it comes to designing its devices. This ground-breaking GALAXY S4 zoom is one such example. It looks like Samsung glued the front of a GALAXY S4 Mini to the back of a GALAXY Camera or vice versa and called it a day. Apart from that, I can't tell which part is the front or back. It is kind of weird to put this thing inside my pocket due to its fat dimensions. Plus, I don't want to give people the wrong impression

about me. So, most of the time it will be inside my bag. Besides that, I constantly get that "Why is she talking to a camera?" look every time I take a phone call. This device is quite heavy too. Nonetheless, it is good for an ice breaking subject matter of your conversation when you're stuck in an awkward moment of silence.

IT'S ZESTY!

The GALAXY S4 zoom is more like the GALAXY S4 Mini in many ways. It has the same 4.3in Super AMOLED, making the display rather excellent. However, it is certainly not the sharpest. Nevertheless, it is fairly nice for a screen this small. The blacks are inky and the colours are vibrant. You still have to look pretty hard to see the pixels. Even so it is adequate for previewing pictures that you take with the camera, making it better than most point and shoot cameras that are in the market.



DO THE TWIST

Now the camera. Just how good is the GALAXY S4 zoom's rear-facing shooter? I won't say it's excellent but I do think it is quite good for a camera phone as how Samsung would prefer it to be. It has 16MP, autofocus, a bright LED flash, and a whopping 10x optical zoom lens that has an adjustable zoom ring. Just one problem. I find the zoom ring a bit clunky to use so I had to use the onscreen zoom control buttons more. The optical zoom itself is powerful and very effective when compared to the digital zoom that you would find on most cameras that phones use.

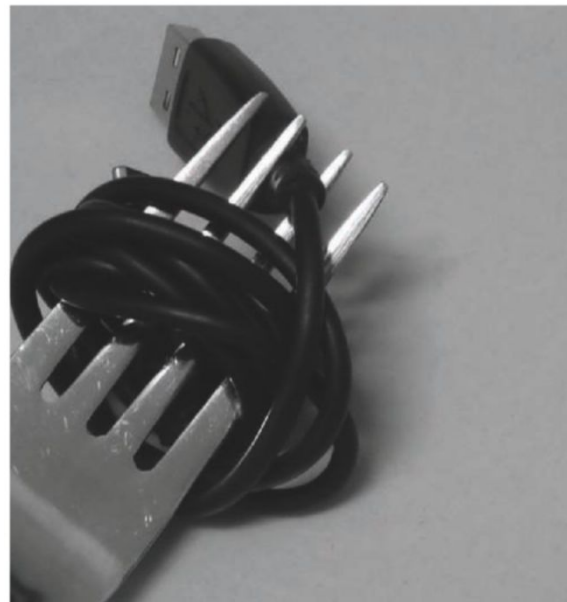
PICTURE PERFECT

The automatic focus is a truly welcomed feature though it is perhaps not as quick as you would expect from a proper camera. There were many instances when we were faced with a time-sapping red square while the camera struggled

to find the optimum range to snap a picture. It always got there in the end, but sometimes it took longer than necessary. In such cases, you could try taking the odd chance if you are after quick snaps.

LOADED TO BEAR

The GALAXY zoom is packed with extra features too, including touch focus, face and smile detection, optical image stabilisation, HDR, and a panorama shooting mode. When it comes to picture quality, it is very good compared to most camera phone rivals, offering good levels of details and reliable colour balance. For instance, there's a tendency towards overexposure on the automatic settings that I could have done without. You can get around that problem by adjusting the exposure settings. However, on this type of point and shoot device, I am more comfortable letting the camera do all the work. **PC**





Power to the Max

by din

MSI Z87 MPOWER MAX

SCORE



9.6

If PC.Com is akin to what Top Gear is for cars

the McLaren MP4-12C of the computing world. In a world where the Asus's gaming equivalent (read: Ferrari) is highly revered, MSI tries to disrupt the status quo of high-end and gaming motherboards with its Z87 MPOWER MAX. Does it have the necessary potential to be a contender in the high performance side of computing or is it just a flash in the pan? With the help of our own Stig, we try to find out.

WHAT A LOOKER

everything. This mentality roughly translates to the world of computing as well. With MPOWER MAX, MSI aims to have that all covered. A black body adorned with some splashes of yellow is a joy to look at, giving that performance aura that bodes well with any casing that it's fitted into. As we all know, each supercar has its own unique chassis, hand-built to perfection. While not similarly crafted, the same can still be said of MSI's latest motherboard.

EXPERT TESTED

Within the box, you will find a clear file that has a certificate inside, which states the MSI overclocking team has tested it to its limits, guaranteeing a certain performance rating has been achieved when using a combination of high-end processor, RAM, GPU, and PSU with the MPOWER MAX. A guide is also included to show what kind of CPU fan you should use for overclocking. Interestingly, the overclock is managed not by a painstaking manual configuration in the bios but with just using the OC Genie button on the motherboard. This is like the Sports Mode button on a car. It has become that simple to get more performance out of your PC.

TURBO ANYONE?

Performance aside, the board build quality is top notch - something

that you would expect for a top end motherboard.

There is an L shaped heatsink near the CPU socket slot for better heat dissipation as well as a large heatsink on the Southbridge, which sports a MSI logo that glows when it's turned on, for extra coolness (pun intended). I am quite surprised to see that it can accept and operate with an extra 8-pin power connector besides the normal 8-pin it provides. This is like having a dual clutch gearbox for that extra performance gain. It also has a slot for the supplied WiFi/Bluetooth dongle, so you'd be all set with all the connections that you need. Interestingly, the board has two HDMI output as well as one DisplayPort, which means needing a converter if you are using DVI (or god forbid, VGA). But then again, an owner of something this magnificent should already have a dedicated graphics card that can be used either in a SLI or CrossfireX configuration, depending on which side of the line (green or red) you are on. The MPOWER MAX also sports four DDR3 RAM slots and 8 SATA 6GB/s connectors, promising blazing transfer speeds and ample storage space.

FORGED FROM A UNICORN HORN

In terms of testing, nothing was held back as I gleefully paired this motherboard up with the Intel 4770K, the fastest processor that we can get our hands on. In short: it does not disappoint. Passmark's PerformanceTest garnered 1944.8 points and 11073 points on Futuremark's

PCMark8. Then we tested again with the OC Genie button turned on, and voila, we managed to get 1991.9 points on PerformanceTest, and 11282 points for PCMark 8. If Jeremy Clarkson buys a PC like how he buys car, then I would like to think that the MSI MPOWER MAX would be his

first choice.

MSI Z87 MPOWER MAX

Socket Intel Socket 1150

CPU (Max Support) i7

Chipset Intel Z87 Express Chipset ATX
Memory Dual Channel DDR3 1066/1333/1600/1866/2000/2133/2200/2400/2600/2666/2800/3000(OC) MHz

Max Memory 32GB

Expansion

3x PCI-E x16 Gen 3, 4x PCI-E x1

Storage 1x mSATA, 8x SATA III

USB 6x USB 3.0, 6x USB 2.0

Display 1x DisplayPort, 2x HDMI

Network 1x Gigabit LAN,

Audio 6x Audio Jacks + 1x SPDIF

DirectX Support Version 11

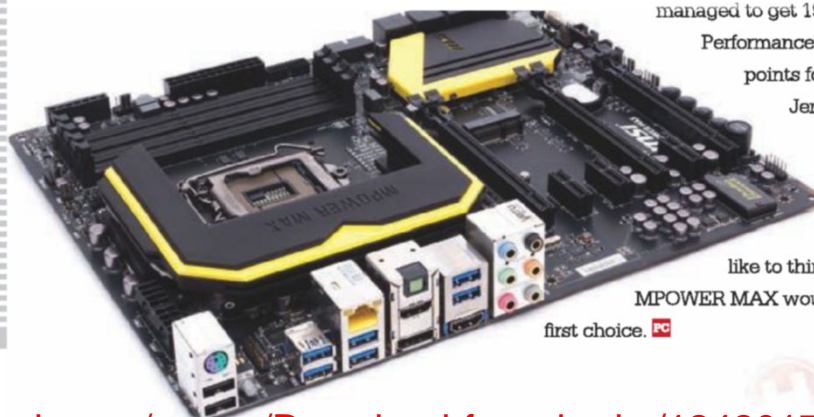
PCMark 8 11073, 11282 (Overclocked)

PerformanceTest 64

1944.8, 1991.9 (Overclocked)

VERDICT

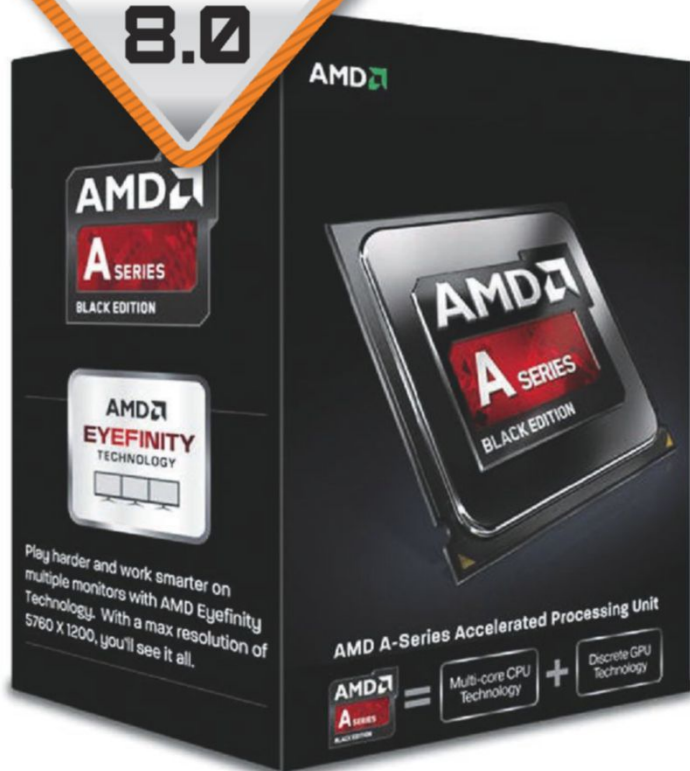
As Jeremy Clarkson once said, "MORE POWEEEEERRRR!!!"



SCORE



8.0



Long Black

by din



I had been wanting to test the new AMD APU processors but never had the time or

A8 6600K (Black Edition) processor is on its way over. Lucky! Based on the Piledriver microarchitecture, this processor is using the new 32nm technology that AMD had developed. The Black Edition monicker that is tagged onto the CPU means the multiplier is unlocked, which gives users full control on how they want to overclock the new A8.

UN-BOXED

The processor comes in a sleek black box, which corresponds to the Black Edition tagline. It fits any FM2 (socket 904) board and comes with a normal AMD CPU fan that I highly recommend to be exchanged for a better third party one. Nothing beats a cooling system that offers more performance in terms of cool down rate. The only thing I wished AMD had changed is the processor's physical design, which still uses the traditional pins that plug into the socket of the motherboard. I'd prefer the competitor's pinless design but then that's a personal preference of mine since you won't really see the feet much after the CPU is installed onto the board.

AFFORDABLY POWERFUL

While many has viewed AMD as losing ground to Intel, it is still, without a doubt, producing reliable processors that have a higher value for money. This is purposely done for users who are on a tight budget but yet want to get the

performance they need without breaking their bank account. The A88 6600K fits that ma

And this is just using normal air based stock cooling fan mind you. You can definitely expect higher clock speeds with custom overclocking and having a better CPU heatsink.

BONUS PAIRING

Internally, the CPU comes with the Radeon HD 8570D built-in. This onboard GPU can be combined with a separate discreet video graphics card to acheive a CrossfireX like boost. As listed on the box, the AMD A8 6600K pairs well with the HD 6670 and HD 6570 GPUs. Not bad if you are looking for an extra power for your gaming session.

SPEEDY AND THEN SOME

For the benchmarking run, we had the AMD A8 6600K installed on a Gigabyte F2A85X UP4 motherboard, coupled with 4GB of Kingston DDR3 RAM, and - but of course - Windows 8 Pro. AMD was kind enough to provide the new PC Mark 8 for this test as it knows our readers want the best comparison measurements on the performance of the product according to the situation. In our tests, we managed to get a score of 2598 for Home, 2418 with Creative while Work generated 3911. Such high scores prove that the new AMD A8 is a reliable and robust processor and should be a good choice if you are looking for something that would work without much fuss and won't kill your budget. **PC**

AMD A8 6600K PROCESSOR

Processor AMD Quad-Core A8-Series APU for Desktops

Model

A8-6600K APU with Radeon HD 8570D

Core Count 4

Base Speed 3.9GHz (4.2GHz Turbo)

Memory Interface DDR3-1866

L2 Cache Size (KB) 1024

L2 Cache Count 4

Socket FM2

DirectX Version: 11

Onboard Graphics: HD 8570D, 844MHz Core speed, 256 Stream Processors

Crossfire: Hybrid Crossfire Capable with HD 6670 / HD 7750

VERDICT

Never count out the red team.





| TESTED



9.2



Largely Redefined

Sony

by victor yap



When PC.com got the call that it'd be getting a Sony Xperia Z Ultra for review, all within the Tested Labs groaned somewhat. It was a mixed of good and bad mutterings and gnashing of teeth. On one hand, there was some underlying excitement to try out the latest and greatest from Sony Mobile. However, the flip-side was having to deal with a tablet like smartphone that had no inkling of being neither here nor there as it comes with a 6.4in design. However, such things have never stopped us - or me specifically - from putting these sort of devices through its paces. I've been waiting to try it out since Sony Mobile announced it at Shanghai, so let's see how well the Xperia Z Ultra will do.

ATTENTION SEEKER

Let it be known that the heft of the Xperia Z Ultra is the perfect conversation starter. Whip it out and everyone around you would go 'Wow!', quirk an eyebrow or even tilt their head in curiosity. Some would rub their eyes even to check if

they are seeing things. The large screen of this smartphone (yes, it's a phone, so hush!) is the

of all when it is taken out. Thankfully, the only thing big about this device is the screen and its similarly large back case.

THE BIG SLIM

Belying the large format Full HD screen is the super slim chassis that encases the screen and innards. That is the second thing many will notice of the Xperia Z Ultra - how it is so slim for such a huge device. To be specific, it only measures 6.5mm in depth. This goes to show how impossibly thin the Sony smartphone really is.

RICH COLOURS

What's even more amazing is how the Xperia Z Ultra blew everyone off their feet with its super bright and exceedingly vivid TRILUMINOS powered Full HD screen. Backing the X-Reality for Mobile system and Sony Mobile BRAVIA

Engine 2 platform that the smartphone uses, not only are images sharper, even the colours became

there are more shades of blue, and I never knew there are so many green hues to look at. Every colour in between jumped out as well, giving images, videos, games, and all sorts of multimedia content an extra 'oomph!' when displayed on this smartphone. This is further exemplified with Full HD videos. YouTube content never looked so good on a mobile device before! KARA's Pandora MV had a richer tone as did the Final Fantasy XV debut trailer. What got me was how I noticed additional details in these videos that I never noticed on bigger screens (like the Sony 4K TV I reviewed on pg. 76). My theory: it's because the pixels are more densely compact on the 6.4in screen than the 65in screen of the 4K TV.

PERFORMANCE OVERLOAD

The 2.2GHz Quad-Core CPU, paired with 2GB RAM and 16GB storage memory, is more than



capable when it comes to dealing with Full HD content—both the video and game kinds, multi-tasking, and even processing large image editing jobs. Did I say large? I meant, super large! The Xperia Z Ultra is also the sort of device that you'd want to view content together with your friends. Not the file transfer sharing sort but more of showing it all off on the 6.4in screen or, better yet, beaming it onto large format TVs. Honestly, I only did the latter twice as the humongous screen on this smartphone is more than sufficient to show friends the content I am currently consuming.

NON-DISCRETE

The only downside of using the Xperia Z Ultra: I cannot secretly chat or reply messages at meetings or press events anymore since the large form factor draws a fair bit of attention to me. That is a major bummer especially if I am at meetings that are bound to bore me to death. If I were to put a positive spin to this, it means I have to pay attention to the discussion at hand. Personally, the

large screen gives me a more comfortable typing experience as well as more screen space to read my eBooks and enjoy my gaming time in a bigger

ALL IN ALL

As a smartphone, the Xperia Z Ultra is not convenient to use as it is simply too clunky to put on my face when I take calls. That's where the handy Bluetooth headset comes into play. But really now, this device is so much more than a phone. It's obvious that the large screen, all 6.4in of it, beckons for users to use it as the perfect compact replacement for tablets. Having speedy content processing, it is without a doubt that the main aim that Sony Mobile has in mind for the Xperia Z Ultra is to offer the best Full HD multimedia experience. And thanks to its IP55 and IP58 certification, which guarantees the device as both water- and dust-proof, there is no need to worry about getting it wet or muddy at all as you fulfil your need for extreme fun! **PC**

SONY XPERIA Z ULTRA

Dimensions (HxWxD) 179 x 92 x 6.5mm

Weight 212g

Processor 2.2GHz Qualcomm MSM8974

Quad Core

Memory 2GB

Storage 16GB

Operating System

Google Android 4.2 (Jelly Bean)

Display 6.4in TFT Capacitive

Touchscreen, 16 millions colours, 1920x1080 pixels

Connectivity Bluetooth 4.0, aGPS, NFC, Wi-Fi and WiFi Hotspot functionality, Xperia Link

Quadrant 18,633

Antutu 33,758

VERDICT

Too big for a pocket but, still, oh so good!





SCORE



9.0

Small yet Big

Asus ROG Maximus VI Impact

We had tested the Maximus IV Hero, as well as the Gene, now let us check out the smallest (literally) brother in the Maximus family, featuring the all new Lynx Point Chipset: the Maximus VI Impact. Catered towards gamers that like to keep their gaming PC small and easy to carry, but feels that a gaming laptop would be too underpowered for their needs, the Maximus VI Impact is built around the mini-ITX standard, and yet, it does not cut any corners in terms of performance.

WHAT SMALL FEET YOU HAVE

The board still stays true to the Republic of Gamers (ROG) colouring scheme, which is a cool jet black and red combination. As mentioned before, the board is using the mini-ITX form factor, hence it's really small - just around 1/3rd the size of its largest brother, the Hero. But don't let the size fool you. It still contains all the goodies that make it an ROG. You can see this in the unique approach ASUS has taken with the board.

UNIQUE CIRCUITRY

Since it is small in size, it lacks space for some important circuitry. It is not a problem since ASUS added an extra slots as part of a riser card on top of the board. The



great thing about it is that it does not look out of place. Instead it acts as nice heatsink shield that compliments the overall design of the board. It also managed to cram onboard start and reset buttons, something that you would only expect to find on the much larger siblings, and not the Impact.

ENOUGH CONNECTIVITY

Being a mini-ITX means there are some sacrifices to be had with the design. But for the Maximus VI Impact, it's not really that apparent. It only features a limited to one PCI-E x16 3.0 graphic expansion slot as well as two DDR3 Ram slots. But then again, one that is looking for something this small is certainly not looking to do any SLi or CrossfireX setups in the first place. The rear I/O offerings are quite plentiful, which surprised me honestly. With this tiny motherboard, you

are getting four USB 3.0 and four USB2.0 ports. A Gigabit Lan, an e-Sata connector, as well as one HDMI and DisplayPort each complete the list of connectors available.

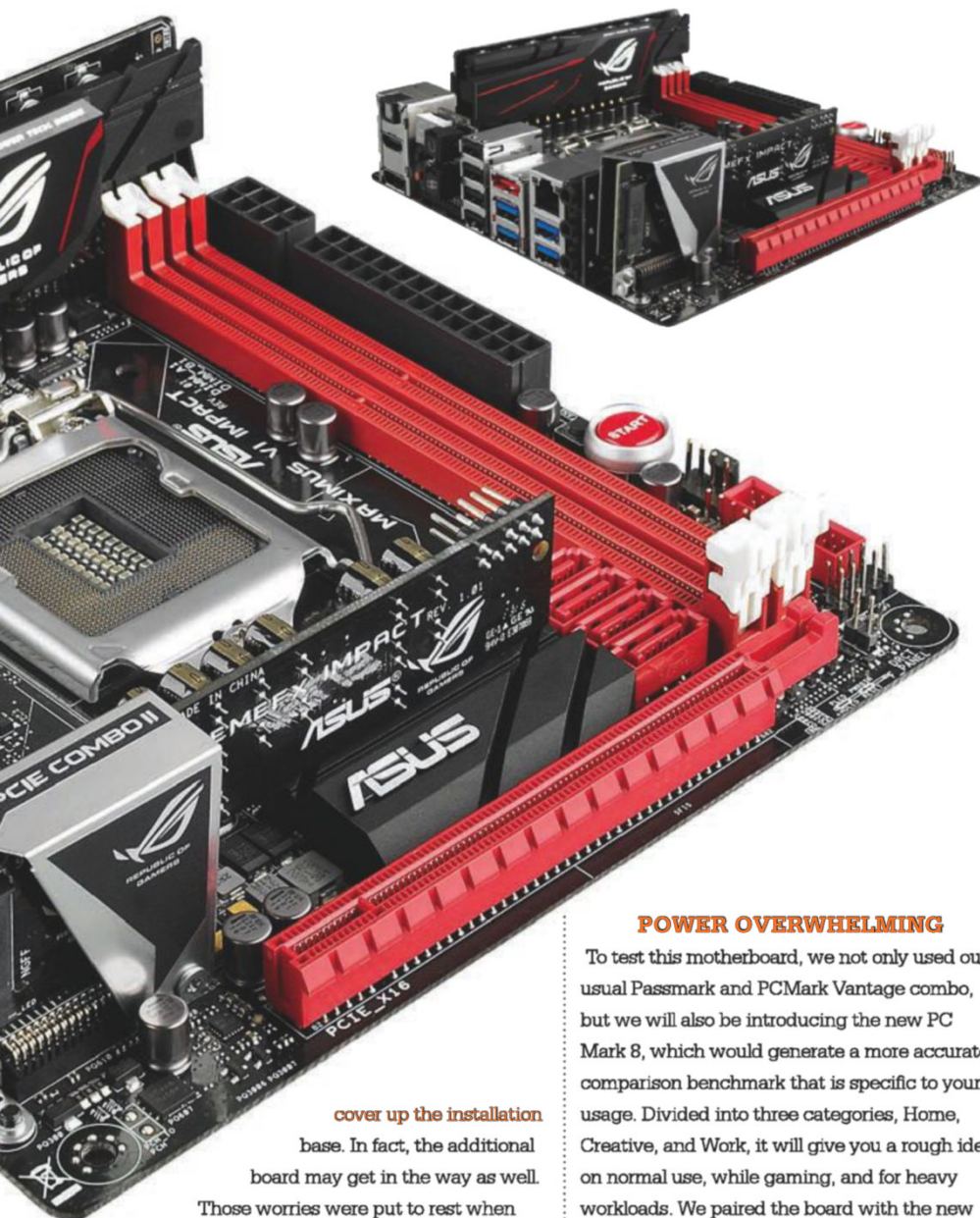
ADDITIONAL EXTRAS

As a bonus, ASUS included a Wifi/Bluetooth module, the very same one that you had to separately buy for the Maximus VI Gene. The Supreme FX dedicated sound module is also included; ensuring a little more 'oomph!' on the sound side is present. We had some problems with the Wifi module though, as it was around 2cm taller than the rest of the other I/O connectors, getting into the way of the casing fan. Notably, there are four Sata 6GB/s connectors, which is plenty for a MiniITX. The overall spacing is well done as you can easily fit a large custom third party CPU cooler if you wanted to.


EASY SETUP

Taking the Maximus VI Impact out of the box is easy enough but I stopped to wonder if I could use my standard sized casing as the mini-ITX design will not





POWER OVERWHELMING

To test this motherboard, we not only used our usual Passmark and PCMark Vantage combo, but we will also be introducing the new PC Mark 8, which would generate a more accurate comparison benchmark that is specific to your usage. Divided into three categories, Home, Creative, and Work, it will give you a rough idea on normal use, while gaming, and for heavy workloads. We paired the board with the new Intel 4770k, the fastest CPU we can get our hands on. Right after testing, we managed to get 1929.5 points for Passmark, and 10702 for PC Mark Vantage. As for PC Mark 8, the board achieved a respectable score of 3154 for Home, 3489 in Creative, and 4379 for Work. Very impressive! 

cover up the installation

base. In fact, the additional board may get in the way as well.

Those worries were put to rest when

I quickly slot it into place and screwed it in tight. Since it is tiny to begin with, cables didn't get in the way though it was hard to put in the RAM initially and connect the necessary cables into place. Even with these minor hiccups, it took less than 20 minutes to install and fire-up the smallish motherboard.

PINT-SIZED

Once everything is in place, I took a good look at the Maximus VI Impact inside the casing and realised how tiny it really is. The discrete graphics card, performance RAM, and cables figuratively ate up the motherboard, creating a situation where the PC doesn't seem to be operating with a motherboard. If only that were achievable in real life!



ASUS ROG MAXIMUS VI

IMPACT

Dimensions 17 cm x 17 cm (Mini ITX Form Factor)

CPU Intel Socket 1150 for 4th Generation Core i7/Core i5/Core i3/Pentium/Celeron Processors, Supports Intel 22 nm CPU, Supports Intel Turbo Boost Technology 2.0
Chipset Intel Z87

Memory 2 x DIMM, Max. 16GB, DDR3 3000(O.C.)/2933(O.C.)/2800(O.C.)/2666(O.C.)/2600(O.C.)/2400(O.C.)/2200(O.C.)/2133(O.C.)/2000(O.C.)/1866(O.C.)/1800(O.C.)/1600/1333 MHz Non-ECC, Un-buffered Memory Dual Channel Memory Architecture, Supports Intel Extreme Memory Profile (XMP)

Graphic Integrated Graphics Processor with Multi-VGA output support for HDMI/DisplayPort ports

- Supports HDMI with max. resolution 4096 x 2160 @ 24 Hz / 2560 x 1600 @ 60 Hz
- Supports DisplayPort with max. resolution 4096 x 2160 @ 24 Hz / 3840 x 2160 @ 60 Hz

Connectivity USB 3.0 x 4, USB 2.0 x 4, 3 x Audio jack(s), 1x Gigabit Lan, 1x HDMI, 1x DisplayPort, 1 x Optical S/PDIF out, 1 x Clear CMOS button, 1 x ROG Connect On/Off switch(es), 1 x Q-Code LED

Wireless Wi-Fi 802.11a/b/g/n/ac, supports dual band frequency 2.4/5GHz, Bluetooth V4.0
Bluetooth V3.0+HS

Audio ROG SupremeFX Impact 8-Channel High Definition Audio CODEC

- Supports : Jack-detection, Multi-streaming, Front Panel Jack-retasking
- Lineout DAC playback Signal-to-Noise Ratio (A-weighted, Differential output): 115 dB
- Headphone DAC playback Signal-to-Noise Ratio (A-weighted, Differential output): 110 dB
- TI LM4562 high-fidelity audio OP AMP(s)

Storage 4 x SATA 6GB/s, red; 1 x eSATA port, red; 1 x M.2 (NGFF) Socket 2 on mPCIe Combo II expansion card(s), black

Expansion 1 x PCIe x16 Gen 3, 1 x mini-PCIe 2.0 x1 (comes pre-installed with a Wi-Fi/Bluetooth module on mPCIe Combo II expansion card)

PerformanceTest 64 1929.5

PCMark Vantage 10702

PCMark 8 3154 (Home), 3489 (Creative), 4379 (Work)

VERDICT

Size Does Not Matter!





| TESTED

Big and Speedy

OKI Colour MFP MC362dn

SCORE



7.6



OKI COLOUR MFP MC362DN

Dimensions (HxWxD)

444 x 427 x 509mm

Weight

29kg

Memory (RAM)

Standard: 256MB;

Maximum: 768MB

Print Speed A4

22ppm colour, 24ppm mono

Time to first print (TTFP)

9 seconds colour, 8.5 seconds mono

Warm up time

Up to 60 seconds from power on and up to

32 seconds from power save

Processor speed

533MHz

Scan Resolution

Up to 1200 x 1200dpi

Scan Speed

Up to 20ppm colour, up to 30ppm mono

Colour depthInput

48-bit / Output 24-bit

Document input

50-sheet Reverse Automatic Document

Feeder (RADF), flatbed scanner

Contrast

7 Levels

Format

PDF, M-TIFF, JPEG, XPS

First copy out time (FCOT)

Less than 14 seconds colour, less than 12

seconds mono

Copy speed

Up to 22cpm colour and up to 24cpm mono

Copy resolution

Up to 600 x 600dpi

Reduction/Enlargement

Zoom 25-400%

Maximum copies

99

Connectivity

10/100 TX Ethernet, USB

2.0 Device IF, USB 2.0 Host IF

VERDICT

It can be that mini photocopier you always wanted.



I'm not too fond of big printers - be it single

function or multi-purpose. Those who work with me know that I am partially biased to a particular printer brand, which is known for using the 'Unfair Advantage' tagline. So having to take this at the last minute gave me more reason to be reluctant about reviewing this particular OKI printer. Well at least the OKI Colour MFP MC362dn is a colour MFP machine.

COLD START

Upon setting the printer up, which took less time than I expected, it was a matter of starting up the first print run and see how fast it would take to go from cold. I expected it to be seconds, seeing as this is an OKI. Oddly, it didn't go as planned. It took almost a full minute for the OKI Colour MFP MC362dn to start the paper feed going and put out the first copy. Thankfully, this is only a one-time thing as the other print runs started with a delay time of 10 second or less. That is considerably decent to the one minute wait.

FAST RUN

After that one odd hiccup, the OKI printer really put out print runs faster than I couldtime it. Black and white images, which include grayscale, took less than five seconds to start and took half that time to finish a 10-page run. Colour images took a little longer, 12 seconds to start and 6

to 8 seconds to finish a print run as the printer needed to spool the data before it could begin.

The timed results are the same for print-outs that are set on high quality so there is no real worry for any compromise on speeds when quality is a requirement.

MUDDLED

Printing performance is varied. For black and white (including grayscale) the images are crisp with minimum smudges found. In fact, there is almost no pixel blur at all, ensuring all text prints are pin-sharp. The issue is with colour prints where many of the samples looking washed out or drab. There are noticeable smudging and some loss of image clarity as well, making photo-prints somewhat indistinguishable from the original digital copy. Word of advice, stick with document printing.

ADDED FUNCTIONS

The network functionality along with the other multi-purpose features complement the printing capabilities of the OKI Colour MFP MC362dn. This makes it well suited for small offices that need a multi-function printer but yet do not have the funds to rent a big copier/printer. It's a bonus that the size of this OKI printer is not overly large, which ensures that there is still space on one's desk to work on. Imagine the space saving an office would have if this machine is purchased. **PC**

SCORE



8.0

Flattering

ThinkVision LT2013p 19.5-inch LED Monitor

by calvin khong

It is no secret that having more than one monitor increases productivity. Of course you would look like a super-secret hacker too if you want to see it from another angle. While there are plenty of monitors out there, flat panels are not as plentiful. This is where Lenovo comes in to show users that aside from offering notebooks, it also offers other stuff as well. Can it keep up with the competition though?

SLIM PROFILE

There is a very traditional look about this flat panel monitor. Add in some old design thickness and it looks like those flat display CRT monitors. Since I live in the present now, I expected a slimmer design somehow. Lenovo's monitor offers old school style but yet tries to be contemporary as well. It's a rather odd attempt. To add salt to an open wound, I quickly found out that all the connector ports are located at the bottom side of the device. Personally, I hate plugging everything from the bottom up, so this is a minus point for me. I'd rather not squat down to find the connectors, especially I need to awkwardly bend down to make sure I stick the cables correctly into the right ports. On the bright side, I do like the three additional USB ports that are located on the left side of the flat panel.

QUICK SETUP

Setting up the 19.5in Lenovo flat panel is simple. It comes in three parts: the base stand, neck and monitor. Best news? Only one screw is involved in the process of hooking everything up. The rest are just placing the power cables and choosing

how to connect the device to my computer. It's nice of Lenovo to bundle DVI, VGA and USB cables along with this screen. The only thing missing is a HDMI cable but this is asking too much with such generosity shown. And like all monitors, the bottom right corner features five buttons that allow users to adjust the settings of the screen. They're easy to operate and have no response issues that are common in touchscreen type buttons.

BRIGHTLY LIT

As for the image quality, I am very satisfied. Out of the box, one needs to only calibrate the monitor slightly. This is because of the noticeable warm tint that Lenovo monitor is known for, which can be annoying at times. This is especially true for white backgrounds that are used in the word processing software. Putting this aside, watching movies on it is still a great experience. The blacks are deep, which means no pixilation in dark scenes. The primary colours are accurate too. While it is not the most vibrant of screens, at least it is one of the better ones in terms of brightness.



THINKVISION LT2013P 19.5-INCH LED MONITOR

Brightness 250 cd/m2
Max Colors Built in Screen 16.7 million
Contrast Ratio 1000:1
Swivel +/-45 degrees
Tilt -5~30 degrees
Vertical Viewing Angle
160 deg/10:1 CR 170 deg/5:1 CR

VERDICT

Enough for a SOHO users.





TESTED

What a Pro Wants

ASUS H87M-PRO

Processor Intel Socket 1150 for 4th Generation Core i7/Core i5/Core i3/Pentium/Celeron Processors, Supports Intel 22 nm CPU and Intel Turbo Boost Technology 2.0

Chipset Intel H87

Memory 4 x DIMM, Max. 32GB, DDR3 1600/1333/1066 MHz Non-ECC, Un-buffered Memory, Dual Channel Memory Architecture, Supports Intel Extreme Memory Profile (XMP)

Graphics Integrated Graphics Processor with Multi-VGA output support (HDMI/DVI/RGB/DisplayPort) with maximum shared memory of 1024 MB

- Supports HDMI with max. resolution 4096 x 2160 @ 24 Hz / 2560 x 1600 @ 60 Hz

- Supports DVI with max. resolution 1920 x 1200 @ 60 Hz

- Supports RGB with max. resolution 1920 x 1200 @ 60 Hz

- Supports DisplayPort with max. resolution 4096 x 2160 @ 24 Hz / 3840 x 2160 @ 60 Hz

Expansion: 1 x PCIe 3.0/2.0 x16 (x16 mode, yellow), 1 x PCIe 2.0 x16 (x4 mode, dark brown), 2 x PCIe 2.0 x1

Storage

(Support Raid 0, 1, 5, 10), Marvell PCIe SATA 6Gb/s controller has 2 x eSATA port(s), red

Connectivity 1 x PS/2 keyboard/mouse combo port(s), 1 x DVI, 1 x D-Sub, 1 x DisplayPort, 1 x HDMI, 2 x eSATA 6Gb/s, 1 x LAN (RJ45) port(s), 4x USB 3.0 (blue), 2 x USB 2.0, 1 x Optical S/PDIF out, 6 x Audio jack(s)

Passmark Performance Test

1901.7, 1968.7 (Overclocked)

PCMark Vantage

10568, 11041 (Overclocked)

VERDICT

More affordable alternative



Asus H87M-Pro

Since the introduction of the new Intel 4th gen CPU, there has been a plethora of motherboards that support the new CPU coming out. However, most of them are based on the Z87 chipset, the so-called 'high end' chipset. That if you want

could still make use all of the advantages that comes with Haswell. Well ASUS has heard you as it has introduced the much cheaper, but still quite feature laden H87M-Pro. Based on the H87 chipset, it might not be able to match the P87 in terms of specs but it still packs punch as it has the ability to overclock your processor. So, let's get on with the show!

BASIC NEEDS

The H87M-PRO looks as normal as any board goes. A combination of dark gold and black does makes it seem weird. Unlike the Republic of Gamers (ROG) series, there are no onboard Start or Reset buttons, which are not really missed for something in this price range. It's not flashy or showy, but yet when you are buying this board, you'd expect to purchase something that would work reliably. One thing we are quite surprised with is the presence of a GPU Boost Switch, which will overclock your Intel onboard HD4600 a bit if you need that extra juice. Also, the UEFI BIOS looks just like the one that ROG's use, though coming in blue instead of red. It also comes bundled with the ASUS 5X protection system, which are Stable Power Control, Overcurrent Protection, ESD Guards, High Quality Solid Caps, and Stainless Steel Back I/O.

SCORE



8.8

ALL ROUNDER

getting all four (yes, four!) types of monitor display ports: HDMI, VGA, DVI and DisplayPort. No matter what kind of monitor you use, this board can work with it. It also has four USB 3.0 connectors, as well as two USB 2.0s for legacy devices. Two eSATA ports are also available, which means you can easily add more storage without even opening the casing, or even powering down the computer. There is also a Gigabit LAN port to top it off. As for internals, you have four DDR3 slots as well as six SATA 3 Gb/s ports that offer high speed storage capabilities. There is also two PCI-E 16x Gen 3 graphic card slots. If you are looking for a Multi Graphic Card setup in the future, take note that the H87M-PRO has native support for AMD's CrossfireX configuration.

QUITE IMPRESSIVE

We tested the board using our normal benchmarking tools, Passmark Performance Test as well as PCMark Vantage. On normal usage, the board manage to achieve 1901.7 points for Passmark, and 10568 points for PCMark, which are quite solid. We tried overclocking it a bit, and for Passmark, it managed to rise up to 1968.7 and 11041 points for PCMark. Quite an impressive score for a budget board.

SCORE



8.0



Smallest in the Family Samsung GALAXY Tab 3 7in

Having introduced a few new product ranges into the market, it is now time for the latest revision of Samsung's 7in Android tablet to shine. It is the smallest in the new GALAXY Tab 3 line-up. This device sort of reminded me of the GALAXY Mega, just that it is slightly larger. Let see if this tablet is a worthy successor of the old generation 7in tablets.

AS EXPECTED

It is no surprise that the new GALAXY Tab 3 does not use a metal chassis since it never used such materials even on its high-end smartphones and tablets. Rather, the material of choice is plastic polycarbonate. Some may accuse the GALAXY Tab 3 7in of feeling a little toy-like. But once you've made peace with Samsung's questionable tablet design style and its fragile look, this feels like a well-made device for something that is...let's not forget, a mid-range device. Apart from that, this tablet weighs just over 300g and only measures at 10mm. It is light enough to use one-handed.

WHY?

I must say, this is mind boggling. This tablet only has 1024 x 600 pixels. I don't see why Samsung decided to go with a lower resolution for this tablet. It kind of leaves me scratching my

head and asking myself, "What was Samsung thinking?" The pixels are very evident. Anyone looking to watch videos in HD or play graphically advanced games, would be disappointed with the screen on the GALAXY Tab 3 7in. Despite all that, the viewing angles are surprisingly solid.

HMM...

This tablet can handle the usual casual core apps, like messaging, social networking, and basic multimedia. However, it isn't the best device for gaming. I tried playing Minion Rush on it and it turned out to be a very frustrating experience. First it took a while to load (around 15 seconds) and after that, the game crashed and caused the tablet to hang. I also noticed some level of lag at some parts of the game, which can get annoying when you get to the good parts of the game.

FAIRLY GOOD

I have stressed the battery a little bit (watched two movies, played Candy Crush as it is the only game that ran smoothly, browsed YouTube, and trawled the usual social networks). Even then, I still managed to chalk up around seven hours of battery life. And that is all in one charge! There is even 15% of power left to spare. How is that not amazing?

SAMSUNG GALAXY TAB 3 7IN

Dimensions 111.1 x 188 x 9.9mm
Weight 300 g
Processor Dual-core 1.2GHz
Display 1.024 x 600 (WSVGA) Resolution
Operating System Android Jelly Bean 4.1, TouchWiz Nature UX UI
Connectivity 802.11a/b/g/n 2,4 + 5 GHz Support
Camera 1.3MP (Front) 3MP (Rear)
Connectors USB 2.0, 3.5 mm earjack, microSD (up to 32 GB) External Memory Slot, Micro USB (5 V, 2 A)
Battery 2,330mAh
Antutu 10672

VERDICT

It neither impresses nor upsets me.





| TESTED

Needs More Metal

by calvin khong



8.0



NINETOLOGY U9X1P

Dimensions 137.8 x 69.9 x 10 mm

Weight 160g

Processor 1.2GHz quad-core

GPU: PowerVR SGX544

OS: Android 4.2

Storage 16GB ROM, microSD up to 32GB

Memory 1GB RAM

Connectivity Bluetooth 3.0, WiFi, Dual-SIM, A-GPS

Camera 13MP rear, 2MP front-facing

Battery 2,200mAh

Quadrant 3,923

Antutu 13,132

VERDICT

Perfect for those who wants a really affordable quad-core smartphone.



In recent times, PC.com reviewed a new breed of Android smartphones called Ninetology. And in all honesty, the outlook is good. Feeling boastful and all, maybe because of our praises, the Malaysian company dared to venture into a new territory: the premium market. Cue echo! All of that resulted in the introduction of Ninetology's U9 series. To commemorate this auspicious act, it sent us the new U9X1, one of the U9 trio that recently came out. Can it match the rest?

SIMILARLY OBVIOUS

Touted as the stylish one among its peers, I cannot help but to disagree. The design is nice and all but nothing to put it in the realm of being stylish. Another thing I found out is how loose the microUSB port is. A slight nudge and my cable came off. However, its saving grace is the similarity with Google Nexus 4 in terms of design as it is sleek. As usual, I always frown when manufacturers use glossy plastic and there is no exception for the U9X1. Why? Simple: less premium due to its non-metal feel.

AN ACE

One of the consistent strong points Ninetology has across all its smartphones is the display. And it shows too in the U9X1. Colours are way better than I expected and there is barely any motion blur even in fast-paced action movies like Kill Bill and G.I. Joe. Yet, I did notice the lack of sharpness. Yes, all movies are in Full HD resolution. The curves are not smooth and jagged pixels make a special appearance.

DECENT RUNNER

Coming into the market with a MediaTek 1.2GHz quad-core processor, I find the performance above average. Seeing that the pricing is slightly affordable as a premium smartphone, I don't expect ground-breaking speeds like Samsung or Sony's flagships. Throughout my time with the U9X1, it can handle multitasking, but not too well. Lags are present if too many applications are opened at the same time. This is mostly due to the 1GB of RAM present on the U9X1. Of course, this only applies to heavy duty apps.

LESS SECURITY

Peering at the OS, I am definitely grateful the U9X1 comes with Android 4.2 Jelly Bean. Everything is as fast as me snapping my fingers. And luckily, there isn't a lot of useless apps running in the background. All except the irremovable NO Mobile Security app. With it, whenever I download a new app, the security system will pop up and ask if I need to scan the particular app. It is a nice gesture but giving me the option to remove it is even better! **PC**



SCORE



8.4

Windows In Your Hands

by sharil abd rahman

With Windows 8 (Win8) becoming more and more accepted in the market now, it has come to the point where creating a notebook with touch capabilities and slapping the new Microsoft operating system (OS) on it is no longer enough. Crazy and zany designs are slowly coming out from the research and development centres from around the world to be marketed onto consumers. Acer is one of the more adventurous manufacturers as it uses interesting designs on hand. With the W3, they are again carving a new niche in the market - the question we are asking at PC.com, is the market ready for this niche?

SO SO SCREEN

This is not Acer's first foray into Atom-powered devices. They are one of the pioneers of Netbooks when it ruled the ICT world and recently they came out with the W510 - an interesting design that took the Netbook into the new Win8 realm. That we reviewed in last January so do check it out. As it is, the device is more akin to those data-consuming tablets on the market (like the iPad) than a true blue Windows machine. The 8in screen is like something Korea or Cupertino would produce rather than Taiwan. Unfortunately, the screen quality is a bit more Korea than Cupertino in this instance. It's no IPS panel but the screen still has 5-point touch to provide gesture capabilities in Win8; so the loss of razor-sharp display is not missed that much. Of course, preferences will vary here.

LONG BATTERY

The beauty of this tablet is its longevity. What does this mean? Well, here are some facts that you may want to consider. We received the tablet on a Friday, charged it up, and put it on standby with the occasional need to use it for browsing and watching videos. On Monday, we checked the batteries and it still has 75% left! All this on a single charge! The W3 uses what Intel calls 'Connected Standby' where the device will be on standby mode but occasionally updates apps with new information, such as email and Twitter. This takes minimal battery life so we can expect long standby times for the W3.

AVERAGE PERFORMANCE

We used PCMark 7 on the tablet and got 1387 marks on the test. It is within the margin of error of other Atom-equipped computers but nothing spectacular. Perhaps W3 better? If you are compact, light and p

after all. **PC**



ACER ICONIA W3

Dimensions (HxWxD)

134.9 x 218.96 x 11.35 mm

Weight

0.5 KG

Processor

Intel Atom 1.8Ghz

Memory

2GB

Storage

32/64GB

Operating System

Windows 8

Display

1280 x 800

Graphics

Intel Graphics

Connectivity

Wifi/Bluetooth

Ports

microUSB/microHDMI

Expansion

microSD

PCMark 7 1387

VERDICT

A nice first attempt for something

this small



Screams Affordable

SCORE



7.6



S CSL Switch Star Neo Mi363

by calvin khong

S CSL SWITCH STAR NEO MI363

Dimensions (WxHxD) 60.5 x 114 x 12.8mm

Display 3.5in HVGA, 480 x 320 resolutions

Storage 512 MB, microSD up to 32GB

Memory 256MB of RAM

Camera 2MP, rear

Connectivity

WiFi, Bluetooth, A-GPS, Dual-SIM

Port Micro USB, 3.5mm Audio Jack

Battery 1,300mAh

Quadrant 1366

Antutu 4066

VERDICT

Its disadvantages are more apparent than the benefits.



It's been awhile since I saw an S CSL smartphone in our office. From my memory, most of the company's phones are entry-level and some managed to hit the mid-range category. Looks like it is time to revisit this manufacturer's product through its latest S CSL Switch Star Neo Mi363. Let's see how this dual-SIM phone perform in a very saturated affordable Android smartphone space.

OLD REMINDER

At first glance, the Mi363 reminds me of the days when Android smartphones are still in its infancy. What's more noticeable here is the thickness of the phone. Those who are spoilt with slimmer choices may give this a miss. Nonetheless one thing about this small and thick design is how easily it fits onto my hand. Not many smartphones offer this kind of feeling anymore when it goes 5in and beyond.

WHY SO PICKY?

As the Mi363 is a small device, the screen has to be small too at 3.5in. Only few years ago people marvelled at such a display and now I see them complain about the size being too

small. Being an entry-level smartphone, I see no need to complain. However, the screen resolution can be better. While the 480 x 320 pixel screen is bearable, it can get annoying when I have a problem reading small texts. Pictures look very unnatural too because of the apparent pixels and very bluish tint on it.

LIGHT STUFF

Providing users with a single-core processor clocked at 1GHz, lags are present. To point more fingers, I also blame the 256MB of RAM and Android 2.3 Gingerbread as well. Light multitasking is recommended as the phone is already at its limits running these simple apps. However, it is still sufficient for all instant messaging apps like KakaoTalk, Whatsapp and Viber. On the other hand, Facebook and Twitter is painfully slow. Think of this phone as an instant messaging phone only.

IT WORKS

Looking at the multimedia experience, there isn't a lot of attraction here. Most of the time, I can only watch a 480p videos. Even with such clips playing, the lacking pixel density doesn't really help and my movies stuttered a lot. Moving over to the camera, the best feature it has to offer. In fact, taking pictures simply works on this phone. There is no trumpet to blow, drum to beat or guitar to strum here.

SCORE



9.4

Touching Wonder

Dell Inspiron 14R Touch

While most notebooks that come into PC.com Tested Labs are of the high-end sort, there are some that come in as decent workhorses. The new Dell Inspiron 14R Touch notebook (this is not an Ultrabook!) is one of them. Personally, I am very surprised that this particular Inspiron could perform as stated on the spec sheet. Bear in mind, my experience with Dell is limited to everything but the Inspiron. Perhaps it is good then that I had the good fortune of reviewing this unit.

FEATHER LIGHT

For an entry level notebook, the Inspiron 14R Touch is not a pushover. This is mostly due to the classy aluminium finish it sports. Don't let the metallic like chassis fool you, it is very light, even by notebook standards. It's nowhere near an Ultrabook in terms of weight, but it is close enough. Just keep in mind that you still need two hands to move this notebook comfortably.

POWER PERFORMER


When it comes to office productivity, general web browsing, and everything in between, the Inspiron 14R Touch does not slack one bit. Thanks to the 4th gen Intel CPU it comes equipped with, it is able to perform beyond my expectations. While there is an occasional lag, it is mostly due to the programme that is slowing down the machine. Other than that, the Dell notebook manages to take everything else in stride. Bear in mind that I have not played any games on this as I doubt it would be able to manage any high-end games.

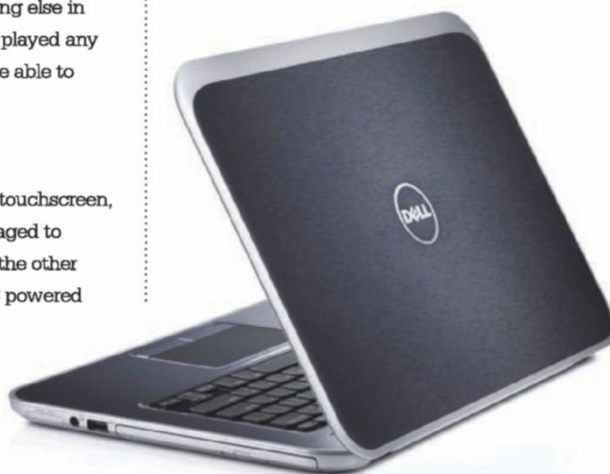
EFFECTIVE TOUCH

As the Inspiron 14R Touch sports a touchscreen, it is obvious that I would be encouraged to try it out and see if it complements the other basic interfaces. Like all Windows 8 powered

notebooks, the touch system is very superior on such devices. For Dell, it is undoubtedly the same. Multi-touch, finger gestures, and smooth touch transitions all work with ease on the Dell. I can't help but forget the presence of my mouse sometimes when I use the touchscreen. It's just that good!

LONG LASTING

Since the Inspiron 14R Touch uses the new 4th gen Intel CPU, staying unplugged for long periods is a non-issue. I need not dig through my backpack for the powerbrick as often as I would with any older notebook. This is a true blessing, especially if I don't have a wall socket handy. On average, I can use this notebook for almost eight hours on a single charge. 



DELL INSPIRON 14R TOUCH

Dimensions (HxWxD) 27.9mm – 32.9mm x 346mm x 245mm

Weight 2.3 kg

Processor 4th Generation Intel® Core™ i5-4200U processor (3M Cache, up to 2.6 GHz)

Chipset

Mobile Intel HM76 Express Chipset

Memory 4GB Single Channel DDR3L 1600MHz (4GBx1), 2GB Video Memory

Storage Up to 1000GB 9 SATA hard drive (5400RPM)

Operating System Windows 8, 64-bit

Display 14.0 inch LED Backlit Touch Display with Trulife and HD resolution (1366 x 768)

Graphics Intel HD Graphics 4400

Connectivity Dell Wireless-N 170x + Bluetooth 4.0, Integrated Ethernet 10/100

Ports 2x USB 3.0, 1x USB 2.0, 1x HDMI 1.4, Media Card Reader

PerformanceTest 1265.8

VERDICT

Need to do work? Then get this!





TESTED

Decidedly

by daryl tan

Samsung GALAXY Grand Quattro

The realm of quad-core processors have always been the playground of the cream of mobile devices. Phones on the decidedly lower tiers have always contended with either being equipped with a single or dual-core processor at best. However, this is all changing with the introduction of the Samsung GALAXY Grand Quattro. As its name suggests, the smartphone packs a quad-core Snapdragon processor from Qualcomm. While only a 1.2 GHz processor on paper, this still translates to an incredibly fluid performance while navigating the phone. Apps open at a brisk pace and pushing out emails while listening to Spotify in the background is totally effortless. Surfing the web on the large 4.7-inch display had also been a stellar experience, hampered only by the low resolution panel.

SAMSUNG GALAXY GRAND QUATTRO

Dimensions 133.3 x 70.7 x 9.7 mm

Weight 143.8 g

Display 4.7 inches, 800 x 480 TFT

Processor Qualcomm MSM8625Q Snapdragon 200

Memory 1 GB RAM

GPU Adreno 203

Camera 5MP autofocus with flash, VGA front-facing camera

Storage 1.48GB usable space

Connectivity WiFi, Bluetooth, GPS up to HSDPA 7.2Mbps

Ports microSD up to 32GB, dual SIM, 3.5mm audio jack, micro USB

Battery 2000mAh

VERDICT

A good choice for those on a budget.



SCORE



8.0

WORK AND PLAY

While its general performance is encouraging, gaming on this device is unfortunately decidedly sub-par; with games like Temple Run 2 running (pun intended) at a healthy clip and heavier games, such as Iron Man 3, and even the popular Minion Rush has a noticeable dip in frame rate. While this is to be expected due to the weak GPU included in the device, it does take away from the performance of the admirable CPU. The Quattro also comes with dual SIM trays and Smart Dual SIM feature, which allow it to automatically forward calls from the phone number on SIM 2 even while the user is using the number on SIM 1. While not all carriers support call forwarding when busy, it's still handy to have for those who use more than one SIM card but might want to ditch their second phone. It's a plus that call quality on the phone is clear with minimal distortion.

BLINDING AMOLED

It is unfortunate that not everything is rosy with this mid-tier phone. The Quattro bizarrely lacks an ambient light sensor, threatening the user with premature blindness once the surrounding lights are dimmed. It's amazingly annoying to have to keep pulling down the notification menu to adjust the brightness settings for every conceivable lighting environment. The incredibly bright and vibrant AMOLED display, while usable in-doors, also becomes incredibly useless once you step outdoors, with the display almost completely washed out even when on maximum brightness. The low resolution panel also exposes the overly strong contrast inherent in AMOLED displays, though some may dig the striking colours.

LACKLUSTRE SHOOTER

As good as that quad-core processor sounds, nothing can save the performance of the camera on the device. The 5MP shooter is so-so even by mid-tier standards; shooting in broad daylight produced grainy images with poor sharpness and colours. In-door shots were



somewhat unusable and night shots are out of

blowing out images. There isn't any HD video recording on the GALAXY Grand Quattro either, only good old 480p. Suffice to say, this phone isn't for the photography buff in your life. At the very least there's always Instagram filters.

LONG-LASTING

There is one thing Samsung got right with this phone: the battery life. I am absolutely blown away by the endurance of the 2000mAh battery included on the device. Using it as my daily driver for the past week, I was able to consistently go through a whole day with copious amounts of emails, YouTube, social networking and general web surfing with juice to spare before I plugged it in for the night. While one shouldn't expect too much out of this mid-range phone, if your requirements are low, or you are looking for a budget smartphone to get started, the GALAXY Grand Quattro might just be what you're looking for. **PC**



7.6

More Push

Ricoh NRG SG3110DNw

by calvin khong



Spending a ludicrous amount of time on printers is the worst thing ever. Add into account paper jam and expensive refills, it can become a true

we are living in the future now. If the past is to come back and haunt us, printers would definitely forced its users to die of high blood pressure if they encounter those problems from long ago. Keeping all the advance technology in mind, let's take a look at the new Ricoh NRG SG3110DNw printer.

SHARING DESKS

Printers are usually a tool that people would remember as big and bulky. Thankfully, the SG3110DNw is easy to move around. Its design wouldn't win any awards as it looks a lot like most printers in the market. However, there is a solid feel in its hefty design and I like it. Personally, I don't mind sharing my desk with it as I like its style and, even for its size, there is still ample space for me to use after I finished setting up the device.

REMEMBER GEL?

No, not those you put on your hair and ask "Still standing?" It is another form of consumable used when it comes to printing. Usually, users would know ink and laser printers and would not likely hear of gel technology in printers. Ricoh decided to be different by using the concept of gel-based ink for the NRG SG3110DNw. One of the benefits of using this is speed and it shows during printouts. The gel dries faster, allowing

me to use my material right away without worrying about staining the back of another paper. The claimed top speed is unachievable as I get only 22ppm instead of 29ppm.

DAMP SWAMP

Even with its speedy output, I noticed after many printouts that the paper used tend to be soggy. It is not wet but I can feel the dampness when holding the printouts, specifically those full page colour prints. I find this peculiar as gel is supposed to dry faster than ink. If my stopwatch is right, the time taken is pretty similar to my inkjet printer. On glossy paper, that Ricoh kindly provided, one should abstain from touching fresh prints as it will smudge the colours. Peculiar indeed!

HIGH GLOSS

When it comes to the output quality, saying that the SG3110DNw is great seems like a stretch. Printing colour on regular A4 paper is very unsatisfying. The lack of saturation is worrying and there were a lot of missing details. On the other hand, Ricoh's glossy paper proves to be its strength. Colours are accurate and there is a sense of depth to it. Yet, how often do I use glossy paper for my printouts? Not so much. Aside from this, texts do smudge. Mercifully, only on ridiculously small fonts.

RICOH NRG SG3110DNW

Dimensions 399 x 436.5 x 212.5 mm

Weight 10.5kg

Technology Piezo Inkjet System

Ink Type Pigment-based (all four colours)

Control Panel

16 characters x 2-line LCD

Resolution Up to 3600 x 1200 dpi equivalent (maximum, RPCS driver only)

Standard Paper Supply 250-sheet Tray

CPU Power PC 464FP

Memory 128 MB RAM Standard/Maximum

Interface USB 2.0, Ethernet 10/100Base-TX, IEEE 802.11b/g/n Wireless

Software Utilities Web Image Monitor, SmartDeviceMonitor, @Remote

VERDICT

While speed is its specialty, the output falls short.





| TESTED

SCORE



9.0



Tiny Speedster

by calvin khong

FUJI XEROX DOCUPRINT 3105

Dimensions 531 x 443 x 390mm

Weight 25.2kg

Media Output Capacity

500 sheets (face down)

Print speed Up to 32ppm for A4, Up to 17ppm for A3

Monthly Duty Cycle 100,000 pages

Print Resolution 1,200 x 1,200 dpi (up to 2,400 dpi image enhanced)

Memory 512MB (Max: 1.5GB)

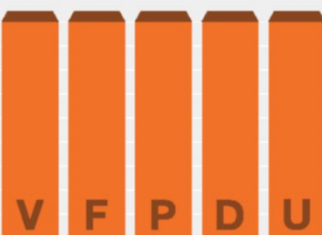
Paper size A3, A4, Custom

Paper type Plain Paper, Letterhead, Bond, Heavyweight, Lightweight, Recycle, Labels, Punched, Postcard, Transparency, Envelops, Banner (297 x 900mm)

VERDICT

Sometimes, people need a one function printer with many capabilities.

10
9
8
7
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1
0



What is this printer doing on my desk? Oh, right. I am supposed to review it. So a brief introduction: Fuji Xerox DocuPrint 3105 is a printer meant for small businesses with a low operating cost. Well, that is what most small printer-makers say. I mean, it is plastered all over the box and brochure. What else is there to this? Simple really... it involves me testing it.

SAVING SPACE

There is usually very little to be said about a printer's design. Most of it lacks that flair and it is supposed to be that way. The only thing I have in mind is the size: tiny. While many printers do come in smaller sizes, there is a twist for this particular Fuji Xerox. Hint: it can also print A3s! Indeed, what we have here is a tiny A3 printer. The more interesting thing about this A3 printer is that I am able to save space with it still. That means more room for my junk...erk...I mean tools of inspiration. For those who need to separate their paper sizes, the Fuji Xerox DocuPrint 3105 is able to add in more trays. Of course, that means paying extra but this is all in the name of being neat!

ONLY MONOCHROME

Wow, such fancy photos you have there. Look at all the beautiful sceneries out there. If only

there is a way to put it into a big piece of paper. Preferably A3 size. Well, too bad! The Fuji Xerox DocuPrint 3105 is a monochrome laser printer. This means it is only able to print in black and white. Hey, don't blame me for getting your hopes up! If there is a need for any indication, you should be able to find it in the name 'DocuPrint'. Anyway, that aside, setting up the printer is a straightforward affair. Just plug it in and install the necessary drivers provided in the CD. Once that's over, you're all set to instantly use the printer.

QUICK DRAW

Here's the most important part: printing quality. As a dedicated document printer, I expect a lot from the DocuPrint 3105. Thankfully, it performs. Taking a look at the print speed, it handles A4 print runs very well. I lost count of the number of print jobs I did, by my estimate, it managed to process 30 pages in about a minute. That is mighty fast if my stopwatch didn't lie to me. As for the printing quality, it all depends on my toner settings. There are four available: Standard, Slightly Light, Light or Very Light. Of course, to be able to read text properly, always use Slightly Light and above. Print quality wise, the text came out sharp and crisp, ensuring that everything is readable. **PC**

SCORE



7.8

Delightful Tunes

by daryl tan



After over two years of using a simple soundbar setup from Altec Lansing, I was pretty excited to unbox a real 2.2 speaker and put it through its paces. It's high time I tried out a new pair of speakers anyhow and this is an appropriate time as any.

A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES

With its piano black finish and exposed

LCD panel sits in the middle of the subwoofer, displaying the current mode the speakers have been set to, be it the default AUX mode or Bluetooth mode. Setup is deceptively simple for such a feature-packed speaker; just plug in the two satellite speakers to the input jacks on the back of the subwoofer and the 2-pin power plug into any wall socket and it's good to go. The Tatoo also comes with a handy wireless IR remote. While the basic buttons like Standby and Mute work as expected, the volume buttons, unfortunately, only work for MP3 and WMA music files played back from SD cards. If you have it hooked up to a Bluetooth-enabled device or your computer, you'll have to adjust the volume manually.

FUNCTIONALITY GALORE

Having grown accustomed to only having a simple volume knob on my old sound bar, I was blown away by the functionality present on the Tatoo. From SD card slots to karaoke mic jacks, Sonic Gear seems to have thrown in everything but the kitchen sink. Users can easily adjust the treble and bass on the fly by simply turning the appropriate knobs without

installing any additional software. The only bummer is the distinct lack of a 3.5mm auxiliary input in front, with only a 3.5mm input cable available on the back that is used to plug the into your computer. While I can't imagine anyone plugging in a karaoke mic into the two available ports on the front of the subwoofer, plugging in your electric guitar certainly works, turning this into a viable mini

BOOMING AUDIO

As with any audio device, the real measure of its value is how well it sounds. The Tatoo does not disappoint as it offers impressive clarity and a thumping low frequencies. Indeed, the Tatoo pumped out music with surprising aplomb. Crank up the bass with the Foo Fighter's 'The Pretender' screaming out of the speakers and you might be forgiven for thinking you accidentally stepped into a live concert. The volume is no slouch either, making for a particularly immersive cinematic experience. The ability to adjust the treble and bass on the fly affords the user incredible control over the sound of any given track. It also helps that the satellite speakers are quite competent, with the ability to produce clear mid- and highs with minimal distortion. In fact, with careful tuning the perfect sound can be achieved. In terms of bass performance, the subwoofer might be a bit on the heavy side, but once again, nothing a quick dial on the bass knob can't fix.

BUDGET AUDIO DONE RIGHT

With certain auditory setups reaching the

stratosphere in terms of price, it's heartening to see a budget speaker that delivers on sound quality. With almost every feature you could ask for, the Tatoo is certainly a purchase you won't regret. It certainly won't satisfy the audiophile in your life, but it sure comes close. **PC**

BTMI SATELLITE

Driver Size 2 x 3in
Frequency Response 180 Hz ~ 20 KHz
Output 7.5W x 2
Impedance 4Ω

SUBWOOFER

Driver Size 2 x 4in
Frequency Response 30 Hz~200 Hz
Output 30W
Impedance 8Ω

Modes AUX-in, USB, SD-card, FM Radio, Bluetooth
A Wireless Remote is Included

VERDICT

Robust features and a surprisingly wide soundscape make this a worthwhile purchase.





TESTED

Can the can?

by magnus

D-Link DIR-850L Gigabit Cloud Router

D-Link has a habit of releasing their WiFi products in pairs. Wireless adapters to go with WiFi routers. This is no different. It also makes it easier to go shopping for gear if you have a new network to set up.

UNIQUE BUILD

We're quite used to the traditional looking routers with their flat boxy shape. Those are a welcome sight and easy enough to hide at the back of a shelf. D-Link happens to like this new can shape, that isn't entirely familiar. Although it does end up using less space on a table; there is the feeling that some corners were cut with the material used. The taller shape might lead to it getting knocked over more often, and thin plastic doesn't normally hold up to abuse.

SCORE

7.0



CONNECTING THINGS

D-Link's router management interface is standard issue and is easy enough for most to navigate. The less informed will be happy to just plug it in and hope for the best. Unfortunately, it lacks the dual antenna array that most routers have and suffers from the occasional signal drop. Building everything into a single body isn't always a good idea.

D-LINK DIR-850L GIGABIT CLOUD ROUTER

Standards

2.4GHz

IEEE 802.11g/n

5GHz

IEEE 802.11n/a/ac (draft)

LAN/WAN

IEEE 802.3a/u

Security WPA, WPA2, WPS

Physical Interfaces

4 Gigabit Ethernet Ports

1 Gigabit WANPort

USB 2.0

WPS Push Button

Reset Button

VERDICT

Requires strategic placement.



Dual Band Solutions

SCORE

7.0

D-Link DWA-182 Wireless AC1200 Dual Band USB Adapter

by magnus



Wireless USB adapters are often overlooked when building a desktop PC. Mostly because we take WiFi for granted in this connected era. Fortunately, companies like D-Link still produce them to ensure that we do suffer from our carelessness.

DEDICATED STATION

For some reason this particular adapter has an entire station dedicated to it. As if we weren't just going to plug it in directly to the computer. Sure there are conditions when this would be a useful feature, but this setup is less than stable and feels terribly plastic-ky. It doesn't even sit flat on a table.

SETTING UP

Getting the DWA-182 running is simple enough. Plug it in and install the drivers off the CD. Provided that you have an optical drive. Another thing that can easily overlooked. It runs on both WiFi frequencies, which should allow for fewer issues when putting things together.

D-LINK DWA-182 WIRELESS AC1200 DUAL BAND USB ADAPTER

Dimensions 97.3 x 29.1 x 13.5 mm

Weight 20.5 g

Connectivity IEEE 802.11ac (Draft), IEEE 802.11n, IEEE 802.11g, IEEE 802.11a

VERDICT

Possible solution if you need an enhanced wireless adapter.





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Illustration by
James Montgomery Flagg

YOU'RE BEING WATCHED

The implications of Edward
Snowden's revelation

by victor yap



Ever wondered what it'd be like if any of the plots from a James Bond or Jason Bourne film had become a real life situation? The sort that has the MI6 agent taking on his own government or the sleeper CIA going rogue on the Agency because they know their superiors are up to no good. If such a situation occurred, it wouldn't have focused on old war rivalries anymore. The crux would have been on what the current world superpowers are more worried about now, which is basically focused on protecting their national secrets - the dirty laundry that can potentially disrupt the peaceful status quo the world currently enjoys.

Such an imaginative scenario became a true nightmare for the US of A when Edward Snowden, a former computer specialist for the CIA and NSA, started leaking highly secretive documents that revealed clandestine spying activities within the States and around the world. This also includes similar monitoring activities that are in collaboration with countries that the US is close to. All of this is supposed to ensure America's safety and the security of its citizens.



Snowden is wanted for crimes the America believes is detrimental to its national security. Will he ever be caught? No one knows

Big Brother is beyond all-seeing as it can even find out that hidden porn stash that is buried deep within the confines of your computer.



Jason Bourne makes for a thrilling movie, but reality seems to be just as exciting



HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Well, what used to be basic profile filtering and information siphoning has now become comprehensive data monitoring, tracking web activities, engaging in illegal spying operations, and organising conspiracy collaborations with relevant industry players. On many levels, the very idea of having protective measures for personal privacy seems pretty useless since Big Brother is hard at work in rolling out new methodologies to ensure that it is always well informed while providing 'better protection' for us.

Generally, the concept of personal data protection and the state of one's privacy seems genuine with all the solutions, infrastructure, policies and best practices in place. Even having proper safeguards of any and all forms for protecting information and activities that

This exciting moment during the summer of 2013 felt like a really long and drawn out spy flick that has gone wrong for the CIA, NSA and its related parties. While it may sound like a fun and engaging situation, the leaked information revealed some of the more underhanded US cyberspace covert operations that had been carried out over the last decade. It came to a point that even countries linked with huge American trade agreements being forced to block Snowden from reaching countries that are offering him asylum. They do this by closing off their airspace.

It definitely feels like a scene out of a Bourne novel!

DAANGEROUS WEB

What we're witnessing now can very well be us if we manage to get caught in similar extraordinary circumstances. This is a clear reminder of the dangers we now find ourselves trapped in since whatever we do is no longer within the comfort of our own privacy.

Feeling a little worried? We all should be since whatever we do can be easily tracked or traced.



"If you think going incognito or using that private browsing option would help, think again."



Picture credit - Nate Cepis, AnimalNewYork

have been carried out on a device and/or the web seems to be fool-proof thanks to the recent education efforts that many security vendors have carried out.

"It all boils down to having proper understanding when it comes to being vigilant about one's personal security. By knowing what to look out for, one would feel somewhat safe with their digital activities and the protective measures they are using for their personal data. However, one can never be too sure as it invites the chance of being complacent," says Eric Chan, Regional Technical Director of Fortinet Southeast Asia (SEA) and Hong Kong.

Kelly Brazil, Director of Systems Engineering APAC for Palo Alto Networks, similarly notes that, "it is important to know and understand that threats are now going beyond the norm. They do more

than just deliver one payload now, which means its danger potential is immeasurable and can have far-reaching effects if not contained properly. That is why educating the marketplace is essential."

These educational efforts should now include the fact that there's not much privacy left for any of us. The concept of relying on basic security services and preventive solutions is no longer enough as most malicious activities are now designed to do more than just hack into a system. Bear in mind that these practices are not limited to criminal organisations as defence agencies and intelligence departments are in on it as well. All parties currently carry out activities, such as monitoring and tracking your activities on the web, finding out the level of security used to protect your data, and how you interact among

social circles - both online as well as offline. Case in point: the US spying activities that Snowden revealed to the mass media.

If you think going incognito or using that private browsing option would help, think again. All web activities are tied to the IP ports you are accessing and how the device is interacting with the web. Even its MAC address is tracked and monitored for access recording purposes. All of these stored information can be analysed with the right tools. While you may be 'hiding' what you're doing on the web browser with these supposedly under-the-radar modes, websites that you visit will still record your activities, like time of access, the number of minutes spent on that URL, and record as well as identify the keywords you are using on the web.



This is how Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and telcos are able to generate user profiles of its customers. It is this sort of information that many parties are specifically aiming for since the depth of data yielded is very valuable in the right hands.

COMMON COMPLACENCY

As is, malicious activities, once focused initially on being a vandal and then, later, moving up to dealing widespread damage, now have set its sights on gathering as much data as it can steal while delivering the same amount of potential harm that many have come to expect. These activities now heavily supplement the more common form of information farming and port attacks that occurs throughout the year, which - according to Akamai's newest State of the Internet Report - is on the rise with new operational sites being established.

With what is at stake, security vendors have to do more than come up with new ways to protect and secure consumer data. They also have to remind users how they need to be responsible and mindful of how they are managing their private information on their devices as well as how they interact on the web.

Even if these new security issues are now a primary concern, oddly, it has not really become a major point of concern yet for the general public as they believe the number of security services they are using is sufficient. This is a true example of how one's over-confidence can be the true root of complacency. The understanding here is that so long as there is enough security services and infrastructure in place, it means everything is fine and dandy.

Interestingly enough, it is because such comprehensive security platforms are being deployed that many became complacent and less vigilant against multiple threats that are presently waiting to pounce on that one perfect opportunity. That is why security vendors are constantly devising new ways to thwart such attempts and have gone as far as pre-empting these malicious activities by proactively predicting strategies that attackers would consider. This includes constantly reminding users to always change their password frequently and to always use an effective alphanumeric password.

"Beyond securing infrastructure and services, the problems the security industry face now are user activity and device management, as in how consumers are browsing the web on their devices and the way these same devices access the network. It is these two areas that are not being

properly protected and managed," Brazil notes.

Chan feels that this whole situation came from a number of issues such as the widespread use of social media networks, the rise in demand for remote access, and the advent of mobility.

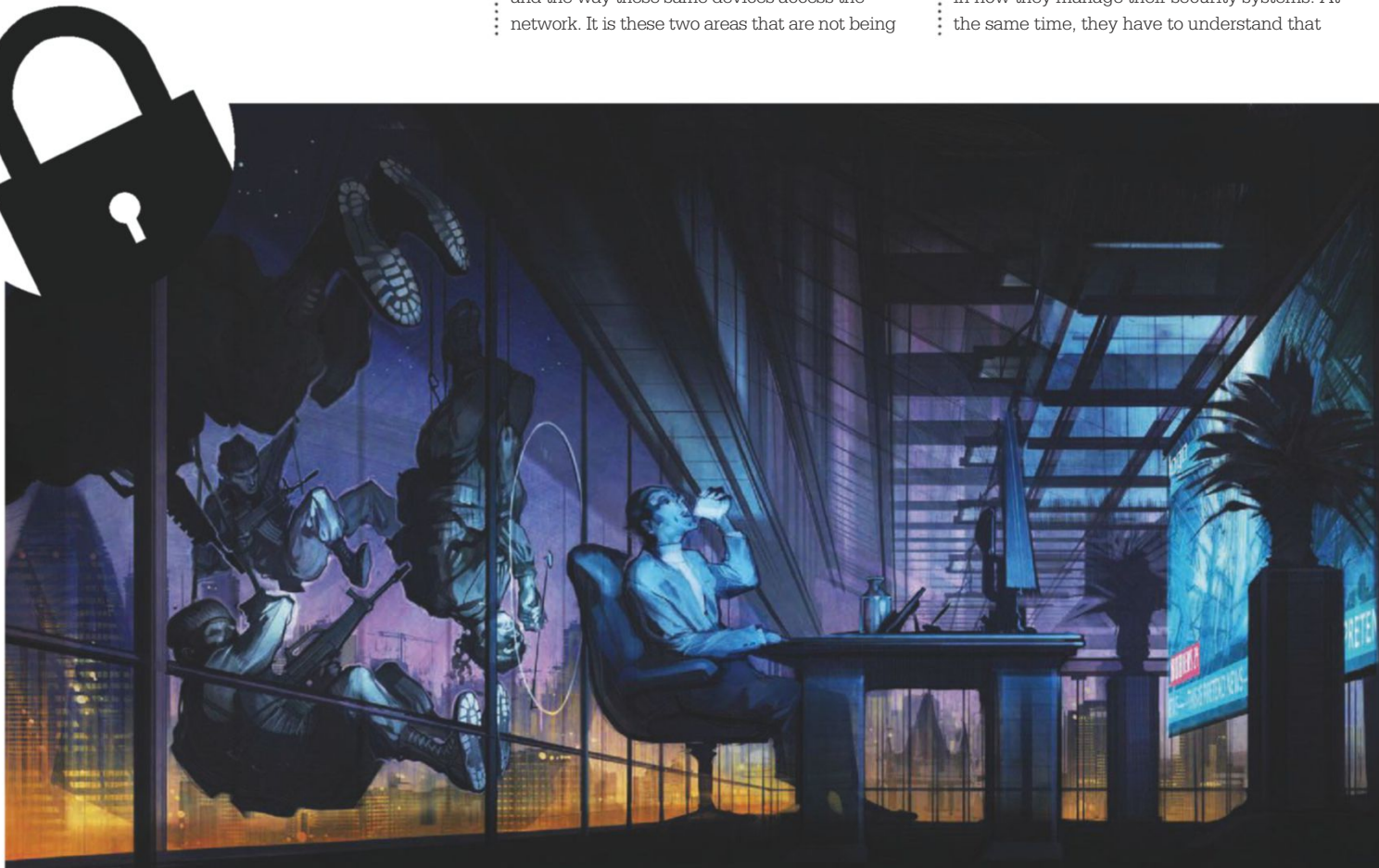
"It's an ever evolving issue that the vendors have to deal with every day. The technologies we use now make it extremely easy for threats to adapt itself quickly and always be a constant problem for us," he shares.

MOBILE BORDERS

As technology improved over the decade, so too did the skills and capabilities of these malicious groups. Now with mobility allowing users to break out beyond the PC, many have become reliant and dependent on the smart devices they use daily. This fact has spurred on the bad guys to do more in terms of malware development and expanding the scope of the threats they are working on.

With the mobility trend now in full swing, user access is no longer confined to the PC, which means threats that are once only confined to the PC can now jump over to mobile devices as well and gather even more personal information.

"In tackling this growing problem, logic dictates that organisations should be proactive in how they manage their security systems. At the same time, they have to understand that



“As technology improved over the decade, so too did the skills and capabilities of these malicious groups. Now with mobility allowing users to break out beyond the PC, many have become reliant and dependent on the smart devices they use daily.”



“We have to not only think differently, but consider out-of-the-box actions as well if we are to keep up and stay ahead of the trend curve,” Chan notes.

With such expectations running high, Williams truly believes the mobile market will consume the ICT market in due time and that there would be a huge surge in apps thanks to the dominance of the mobility trend.

That would be a real pipeline dream since that means we’d be literally wearing our computers by then. It, of course, means we have to be even more careful with how we interact with the web, each other, and the manner in which we manage our personal information and privacy.

If Big Brother and its counterparts are able to watch what we do now on our PCs and mobile devices, imagine what it can do when we start wearing our computers or have it directly wired to our brains. The videogame Remember Me and the concepts that Inception introduced sound like real possibilities that would come our way soon enough. Don’t blink! **PC**



there will be many issues cropping up as well since these threats are also constantly evolving. What we need to do is to head them off through a number of ways that go above and beyond conventional methods. This means having effective policies in place, putting in the right controls, and managing the level of exposure one has against current and upcoming threats,” notes Drew Williams, CEO of Condition Zebra Malaysia.

The mobility trend coined the term, bring your own device (BYOD), and has seen many moving to adopt smartphones and tablets as their device of choice for their work environment. This has caused numerous headaches for the IT department as they have to come up with revised security policies to cater towards the ever-shifting BYOD trend.

“We definitely need to implement tighter security controls, such as having a more selective access level management, improving device management systems, and even introducing policies that regulate what can be done on these

devices and their access capabilities. This can be achieved through advance system virtualisation,” Brazil shares.

LOCK FOREFRONT ENDEAVOURS

Since mobility and BYOD are the current trendsetters, it is clear that there will be a paradigm shift in the ICT industry. That would be the same for the security industry as well. According to Williams, “it will be a Cloudier future where the metadata in infrastructure will be carefully evaluated further to avoid hijacking attempts and better manage security compromises. With the expansion of Cloud Computing, how we define security will be a lot different from what we have currently. It would be more personal as it deals with private information, social media activities, and the like.”

Chan and Brazil share like-minded thoughts as they both noted that mobility based malware is also on the rise and is expected to overtake desktop incidences within this year.

SHOWDOWN



THE FINAL CHECKMATE

Planning many moves ahead, these monitors will compete to be the grandmaster for your eyes

by calvin khong



In the battlefield, it is always important to take your best arsenal in order to win. The same goes with monitors. A lot of users take this for granted as many products offer similar visual and output performance. Here's the thing, there are heavy hitters out there and, most of the time, consumers will get excited when they encounter new and shiny gadgets that make them stare. It's as if they never knew the device ever existed.

So, who are these super players? They comprise big brands that are well known in the monitor space: Dell, Acer, Samsung, HP, BenQ and Lenovo. Out in the field and under the watchful eyes of PC.com, there is only one throne for the Grand Kahuna to sit on. We will be looking at the design concepts of each monitor and evaluate its performance with our rigorous tests. We have movies, games and pictures prepared just for this moment and our eyes are warmed up. Let the match begin!



HP X2401



DESIGN

Something about this monitor seems different. On the box, it states the size as being 24in but it feels as though the x2401 is bigger. Rather, this applies to the chassis and not the display size. Being bigger than what it initially looks means less space on the desk. Thankfully, the slim profile lets users place it as far as the end of the desk allows. Moreover, the brushed aluminium gives it a very nice look, making it feel premium and spot-on impressive to anyone who walks by.

PERFORMANCE

At first look, the contrast between the primary colours is brilliant, making scenes from movies looked perfectly balanced in terms of hues and saturations. However, after a long while of staring at the screen, the real 'picture' starts to show. What we found out about the x2401 is the colours looking just about average with almost no additional depth thanks its seemingly nice ratio mix of balancing. On the flip side, it means there isn't a need to do any calibration for the untrained eyes. Even so, there isn't anything to scream about either. Despite turning the brightness up, it is still pretty much a dim affair.

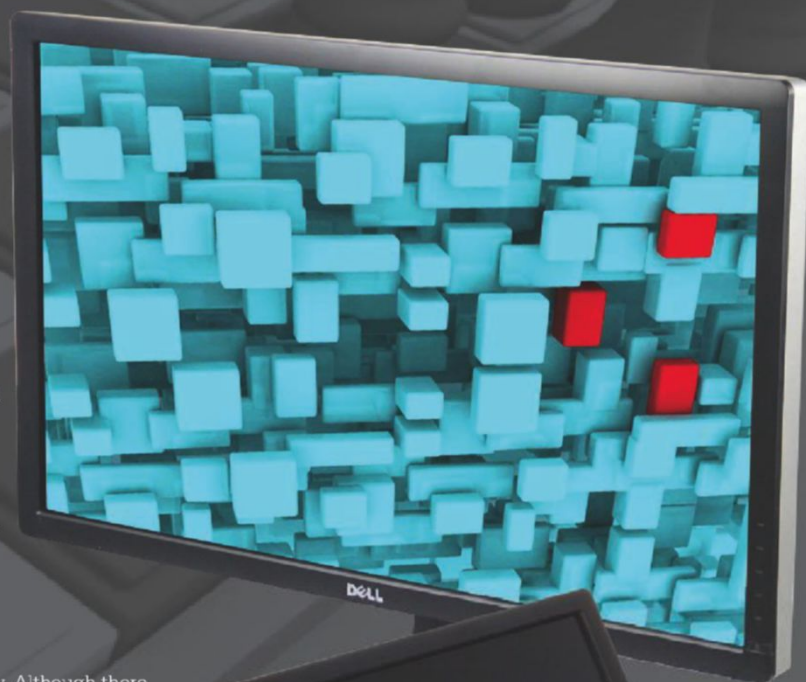
DELL ULTRASHARP U2713H

DESIGN

Surrounding the 27in Dell display is a matte plastic chassis that is accented with a stylish aluminium design adorning its side. While this design doesn't shout for the world to look at it, the U2713H manages to capture the hearts and eyes of many anyhow. Everything about it is slim even if it gives off an oldies vibe. Sad to say, a problem surfaced when using the monitor: its stability. The thin neck means minor impacts on the desk will cause it to wobble. This can get very distracting during work and play times.

PERFORMANCE

'Totally outstanding!' best describes the U2713H's colour accuracy. Although there is a warmer tint when looking at the whites, it does not really bother anything. Browsing through the same pictures over and over on this monitor does not diminish the excitement that I felt when I previewed these images on the U2713 for the first time. It seems fitting for those who want to do all kinds of things on the screen, be it photo-editing, playing games, and even word processing. Complementing the great colour performance is the monitor's black levels, which are so deep that users can easily see the different types of colour and shading depths without any subtle boxy pixels appearing.



ACER SMART DISPLAY DA220HQL



DESIGN

My initial impression of disdain left after using the monitor! In fact, this is even with the fact of how looks very much like a giant electronic picture frame. While the overall chassis is thick, users won't notice it thanks to the use of that one lonely base stand. Using the word 'Smart' means it is supposedly more than just a regular display. Inside lies an Android 4.0 and the only word that comes to mind is awkward. The DA220HQL is too big to be portable since, at most of times, this sort of operating system (OS) is used on proper mobile devices.

PERFORMANCE

Here's a reminder, the DA220HQL is primarily a display monitor. Colours look bright here, though, at times, it will cause images to look more saturated than it should be. With the right amount of rebalancing of brightness, the monitor is able to produce a nice shade of colours. In fact, after calibration, the gradation of each colour is easily noticeable. This will make users feel as if the same movie looks more colourful somehow. However, try to avoid gaming as the refresh rate feels somewhat lacking. This may be due to the Android OS inside.

BENQ GW2760HS

DESIGN

This monitor will make Men in Black proud as black is its only colour scheme. Oddly, the stand, base and bezel are all made from glossy plastic, making it a fingerprint magnet. The high-end feel is diminished somehow because of this. In fact, it's so glossy, one is able to see dust on it. This means, there is always the need to clean this monitor. Thankfully, the shiny build is not too offensive since from a distance, everything about the monitor looks classy. Its ultra-thin form factor ensures it'll stand out as an awesome looking screen and ensure that there will still be space on the desk. Forget about clearing up the table to fit in the GW2760HS.

PERFORMANCE

As the world's first flicker-free monitor, this is definitely not some random claim. Even to professional eyes, this is the stuff of dreams. After a quick calibration, it is easy to tell that colours are very vivid here. This especially applies to the reds. The default colour temperature is slightly warmer but it doesn't deserve any penalty. On the flip side, the start-up time for the monitor is unusually longer than most out there. Thankfully, this only happened when the GW2760HS came out of the box, which was the time I turned it on for the first time. After that, when turned on, it pops to life **in an instant.**





SAMSUNG SERIES 7 S27C750P



DESIGN

If appearance really matters, then the S27C750P is something to look at. The minimalist stand, base and display are outstandingly chic. Leaving it on the desk will make its users look like a professional worker who knows a thing or two about style and performance. Sad to say it comes with a user unfriendly integrated cable storage management case. The amount of pressure needed to open the cover is immense, which makes those attempting to open it be filled with worry that they might snap it into pieces.

PERFORMANCE

Four words: it's quite the performer. Judging by the colour tones, visuals are exceptionally vivid with the general mix having a nice balance. Even the blacks are deep and clean. It is very evident that whether watching an HD film, viewing and editing photos or playing games, users will be delighted by the vibrancy and high contrast that this screen offers. It also helps that this 27in screen has a decent wide viewing angle and the now very popular secondary vertical flip design.



LENOVO THINKVISION LT2223Z FLATPANEL

DESIGN

While Lenovo is not the first name that comes to mind when thinking about monitors, the company does have a varied range of display screens. Using an industrial design, this monitor does feel very corporate. In fact, with the chassis being wrapped in matte plastic, the ThinkVision LT2223z fits with the company's overall business-like design. However, saying as such, every component about the Lenovo display is solid and strong. While taking it out of the box, it is very easy to tell that the monitor is built to last.

PERFORMANCE

Viewing it head on and possibly any other angle, it's easy to tell that the picture quality remains the same throughout. Loss of colour and clarity is very negligible. Additionally, its visual performance is as real life as it can get. Even the contrast balance is great, which means it does not suffer from washed out colours. Playing games, consuming multimedia content, and working on documents feels more like a true pleasure. These monitors further reinforce the fact that the company really knows what it is doing.





SHOWDOWN



	HP x2401	Dell Ultrasharp U2713H	Acer Smart Display DA220HQL	BenQ GW2760HS	Samsung Series 7 S27C750P	Lenovo ThinkVision LT2223z Flat Panel
Display Size	24in	27in	21.5in	27in	27in	21.5in
Native Resolution	1920 x 1080	2560 x 1440	1920 x 1080	1920 x 1080	1920 x 1080	1920 x 1080
Dynamic Contrast Ratio	10,000,000:1	2,000,000:1	10,000,000:1	20,000,000:1	Mega ∞ DCR (Static 3,000:1)	1,000:1
Brightness	250 cd/m ²	350 cd/m ²	250 cd/m ²	300 cd/m ²	300cd/m ²	250 cd/m ²
Response Time	12ms	6ms	12ms	4ms	5ms	5ms




WINNER

When mixing both real world use and colour performance together, one monitor stood out among the rest. Putting all the monitors together is like a scene from Iron Man, except, there is no holographic display to fiddle with. That aside, the one monitor that deserves the crown goes by the name of Dell Ultrasharp U2713H. The only words coming out of our team is 'Wow!' and this is even when people are just looking at the wallpaper.

SPECIAL MENTIONS:

Class of its own – While Samsung did not steal the crown this year, it still managed to turn heads with its minimalist chic yet contemporary design. This is the true definition of style and substance working together.

Breath of fresh air – The BenQ GW2760HS introduces the concept of flicker-free visuals for monitors. Indeed, this is the best thing that ever happened for screens. Its competitors better watch out! 



The Future of Mobile Technology is...You



by HK Kwon, Managing Director,
LG Electronics (M) Sdn Bhd

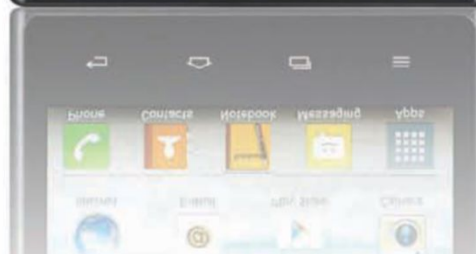
Unprecedented transformation of the mobile industry stems from user demand

Mobile technology has never been more pervasive or advanced than it is today - and it all started with a simple realisation about technology that is built around you, the user.

According to Strategy Analytics, there were 1.038bn smartphones in use worldwide, with one in seven individuals now being smartphone-equipped. The situation here in Malaysia is quite similar: according to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission's (MCMC) latest publicly available statistics, mobile phone penetration rate stands at 133.3%. That means, practically everyone in Malaysia has a mobile phone, while a third of the population has more than one smart device.

Now, think back 10 to 15 years ago - do you remember what mobilephone you were using? Some of you might recall the limited memory space, LCD screens, monophonic ringtones, and definitely having no mobile internet or social networking capabilities to rely on (well, unless you count SMSing your friends as a form of 'mobile social networking')! It's amazing to think how far mobile technology has progressed in such a short time span.

When we combine these two observations - the pervasiveness as well as the modern capabilities of mobile technology - we come across a rather interesting insight. In these few short years, relative to many other forms of consumer technology, the rate of adoption as well as the technological advances of smartphones have accelerated to a point where it has gone from being a mere tool to becoming a personal statement of choice and identity. Think of the way some die-hard fans of major smartphone ecosystems regard themselves and in particular towards those who are not like them. In fact, you'll probably find various internet memes, infographics, and videos making fun of the sometimes acrimonious relationship that exists among the various fan bases.



User-centric Innovation

Indeed, mobilephones have become an extension of who we are, rather than what we use.

As a company, LG prides itself in delighting its customers with unique, people-centric products, which are developed from real insights drawn from actual consumers, to ultimately enhance their everyday lives. LG's deep insight into

great experiences that technology creates for its users, leading to mobile innovations that are built around the users themselves.

The company's passion for user-inspired products can be clearly seen in its recent portfolio

of smartphones. Not to blow our trumpet too loudly, the three examples of what LG has done include:

The Optimus Vu - it won praise from phablet enthusiasts for its massive 5-inch IPS LCD display and a rarely used 4:3 aspect ratio. Paired with an 8MP camera and the 1.5GHz dual-core processor

multi-tasking stay smooth and sharp.

The Optimus G - a highly refined smartphone that features a 4.7in True HD IPS+ display and a Snapdragon S4 Pro 1.5Ghz Quad Core. With



the performance capabilities, it is able to provide all the horsepower needed in delivering a truly

when used on a 4G LTE network. At launch, the Optimus G wowed crowds all over the world and helped the company further consolidate its image as an industry trendsetter.

The Optimus G Pro - the most highly anticipated device for 2013. At launch, it was very well-received among consumers. Using a Qualcomm Snapdragon processor that runs four independent 1.7Ghz CPUs, it is said to offer speeds best described as blazing. The smartphone's 13MP camera is able to shoot in

1080p dynamically-lit video, which looks fabulous on the 5.5-inch Full HD IPS display.

Taking the Next Leap

The next step forward that all mobile vendors and telcos are working hard towards now is to make science fiction become reality.

This past April, LG announced that it would debut its first flexible display smartphones by the end of 2013. In the past, manufacturers struggled to develop flexible displays that could handle heavy workloads, such as the playback of video content. LG, however, has made a breakthrough. The company will apply its OLED technology to overcome the challenges of displaying images

over a continually bending surface. What's more, LG's OLED panels are rugged enough to do away with a glass covering. With such capabilities, smartphone design engineers now have a whole new range of design possibilities opened up to them.

More importantly from the consumer's standpoint, LG will be delivering phones that can be twisted, torqued and abused without fear of breaking. No longer will users dread the sickening sound of an expensive device smacking into the concrete when it falls out of a pocket or purse. And thanks to LG's background experience in OLED technology, the company is well ahead of the curve in terms of bringing flexible phones to market.

Another frontier that LG has set its sights on is addressing user concerns over larger screen sizes. Manufacturers quickly realised that the solution to this problem was to reduce the width of the screen. However, this was far easier said than done, particularly when the screens had to respond appropriately to touch.

To address this, LG pushed the boundaries yet again as it recently unveiled a Full HD LCD smartphone panel that measures a mere 2.2mm in width with a 2.3mm bezel. This makes it one of the slimmest smartphone display panels in the world. And the benefits extend well beyond weight savings. The sheer thinness of the panel will allow more flexibility in smartphone design, allowing for sleeker devices with what is commonly known as better 'gripability'. Even better, image quality isn't sacrificed. In fact, at 535 nits, the panel's brightness sets a new standard in the industry and will allow smartphones to deliver a stunning user experience.

Future Now

Industry pundits believe that in the coming years, there will be an increasing shift towards mobile technologies built around user experience since it is now paramount priority for all. Hints of this shift are already arriving, especially as user trends veer towards increasing social-networking capabilities, location-based services as well as other contextual computing-based interactivity. These merely scratch the surface but we will eventually see a combination of hardware, software, networks, and services that use deep understanding of the user to create tailored, relevant actions that consumers can easily adapt to and quickly learn to use.

All of this will, frankly, be dependent on the smartphone because it's always with the user. At the end of the day it is all about learning from the very best...you. 



Taking Control

A Common Sense Approach to Data and Device Security

by Sumit Bansal, Director of Sales, ASEAN, Sophos

New mobile devices have introduced additional threats to your data security, whether they are company-owned or employee-owned. This is what we call the 'bring your own device' trend (BYOD). You need a plan for locking down data stored on those devices and keeping them secure. As they act like portable computers, it means you should think about protecting them as much as you would your PCs.

With the proliferation of mobility, the number of such devices that you now need to manage is growing.

Sophos recently discovered that the average user carries 2.9 mobile devices. The online survey it recently conducted found that 85% of respondents carry a smartphone,

while another 65% reveal that they carry a notebook, and 48% own a tablet computer.

National and global compliance governance organisations have the ability to levy fines against businesses that lose customer data on unencrypted devices. Aside from paying for credit monitoring services and court-related judgments, the damage to a company's reputation can be costly.

Necessary Actions

Before introducing employee-owned or managed devices into the workplace, you need to consider several factors as part of a remote working policy. What additional applications need to be installed? How can the device be secured? How can network access be secured? What about the data on the device?

Employees are often the first, only and best defence against the theft of sensitive data. They need to understand the appropriate use of mobile devices and how to handle, maintain and protect such critical information.

For those using their own mobile devices must follow policies that keep the business compliant with regulatory requirements.

7 Tips Better Device Security

Here are seven tips that can help you find the balance between allowing employees to use their personal devices for work and the security of your business:

Tip 1. Develop an enterprise strategy for mobile security. Your strategy should include classifying data on mobile devices, such as regulated data





(credit cards, driver's license number), non-regulated customer data (purchase history, email addresses), non-regulated confidential business data (such as IP, business plans and financial records) and employee data.

Tip 2. Create a comprehensive policy and list of guidelines for all employees and contractors who use mobile devices in the workplace. Institute an acceptable use policy (AUP) and security procedures to address the risks associated with each device. This can include the types of data


that should not be stored on these devices, how to determine if an application can be safely downloaded, and how to report a lost or stolen device.

Tip 3. Establish organisational accountability as businesses have a responsibility to provide their employees with the policies, procedures and technologies they need to keep mobile devices secure. In turn, business personal must be accountable and aware of the importance of using their mobile devices responsibly.

Tip 4. Launch awareness training for end-users. Beyond policies and monitoring of employee behaviours, organisations should implement a training programme to help employees understand the new and emerging security threats present when they use their mobile device.

Tip 5. Use application control, mobile device management, patching and other controls to prevent hacking and malware infections. Companies that are using blacklisting methods aren't doing enough to control and manage the sort of applications that can be downloaded by employees onto their mobile devices. With so many targeted attacks exploiting vulnerabilities, you need to be sure the operating systems and applications on mobile devices, such as browsers, PDF readers, and Flash players are patched and up-to-date.

Tip 6. When possible, use remote wipe, mobile device encryption, and anti-theft technologies to reduce the risk of a data breach. A lost or stolen device that is encrypted is much less costly to the organisation than an unencrypted one.

Tip 7. Understand emerging privacy issues related to mobile devices. The exposure of customer or employee personal information can result in reputation damage and costly fines as a result of non-compliance. You need to understand how this information is being shared and what it means for compliance with data regulations. 



New Frontier



management system, which further improves productivity for human resources

- Security Information & Event Management (SIEM)

This tool is designed to assist the Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT) in mitigating security incidents. As the Government put out a directive for all Critical National Information Infrastructure (CNII) to be ISO 27001 certified, TNB is already in the midst of improving its SIEM further to ensure its CSIRTs are properly equipped.

- Internal social media - Powerfaces

This web-based channel enhances knowledge-sharing and promotes work collaboration by allowing TNB personnel to tap into each other's skillsets, work capabilities, and experiences. This has fostered a more open work culture, improving overall engagement between some 19,000 TNB management and staff.

In providing the best service to its customers, TNB has currently implemented an Email Billing project to promote e-billing as an alternative to its traditional posted bills. The use of e-Application has been extended further to include the development of a Staff Module, which will enable all customer service personnel to enter application forms into the system quickly and easily. As a result, the processing time of applications will be shorter and there will be greater transparency as applicants can track their application status online.

Without the ICT division, TNB would not have experienced so many improvements in the last five years. There will be more to come as PC.com will feature what else the ICT team of TNB has in store for the utilities company and how it would improve the overall customer experience.

Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) is usually synonymous with power management and electricity billing. Or so many would think. It also has a division that is solely dedicated to ICT, which is solely designated to ensure the utilities company is in possession of a connected infrastructure that is capable of catering to its ever-changing and highly dynamic business requirements. Several projects are currently being implemented to directly support its strategic business initiatives under its TNB Gemilang 2015 plan. The projects in question are:

- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Billing

The goal of this programme is to replace the current e-CIBS billing and CRM satellite systems with a flexible CRM and billing solution that will enable TNB to support regulatory changes fast and allow for extensive customer self-service capabilities

- Customer Management System (CMS) Upgrade

The Customer Management System that the ICT division implemented in 2009 operates as a self-service tool for customers to lodge technical incidents and put in requests for new ICT products or services. Under the new project, the new CMS is designed to provide better and enriched user experiences by

offering improved reporting capabilities, easier system maintenance and enhanced overall system design

- Supply Chain Management (SCM)

The plan for the SCM system is expected to automate and improve operational business processes so that it can better monitor policy and process compliances as well as step up and boost the management of vendor development programmes

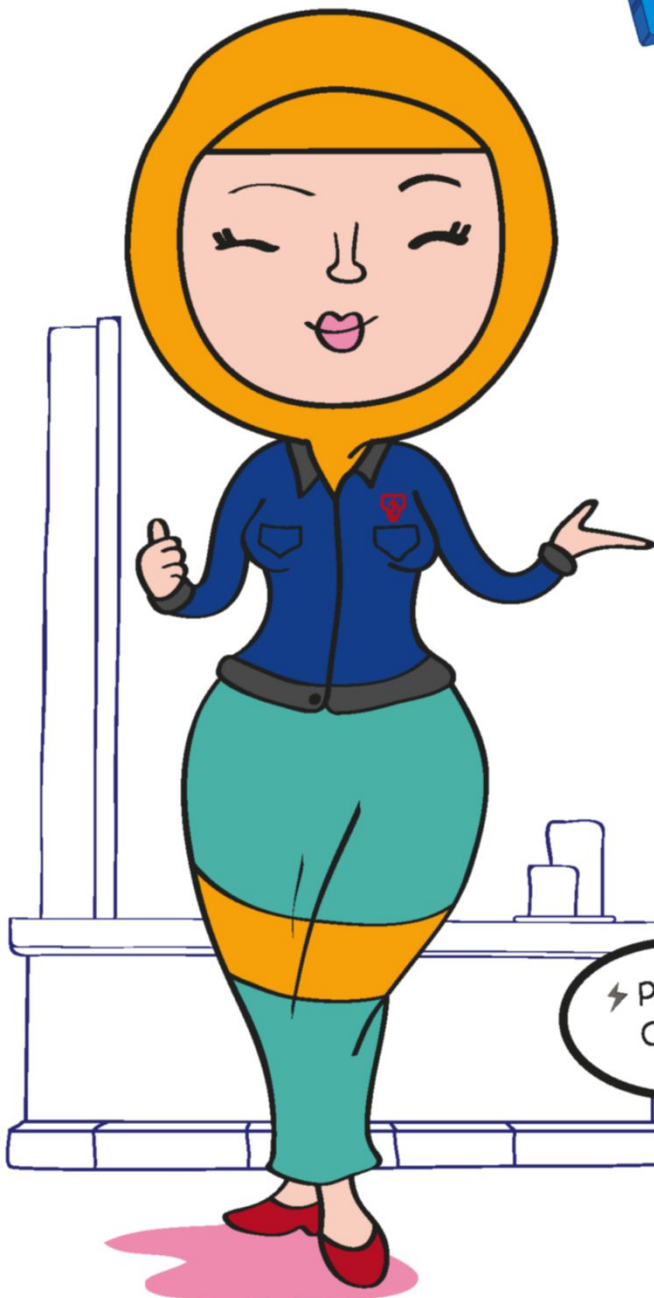
- Application Performance Monitoring (APM)

In production since June 2012, the APM platform covers 22 critical applications, enabling ICT to proactively monitor critical TNB systems by setting various performance thresholds. Improvements that are to be included will enhance the triggering of auto alerts and speed up response times

- Competency-Based Performance Management System (CBPMS) for Non-Execs

TNB has been using CBPMS to plan, track, evaluate and assess the competencies and key-process indicators (KPIs) of executives and technical supervisors through an online environment since 2003. Using an enhanced CBPMS will allow non-executives to participate in the online performance

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Arming for an Attack

Crucial ammunition for organisations to defend against security breaches

by Ivan Wen, Country Manager, Sourcefire Malaysia



Even the most security diligent organisation has come to realise that breaches are no longer a question of 'if' but an issue of 'when.' Yet many still do not factor the inevitability of compromises into their overall defence strategy. They, instead, focus on controls to keep every conceivable type of threat at bay. However, closing every gap that attackers are able to find and working to reduce the surface area of attack to zero is fundamentally flawed.

This is due to the fact that recent attack chains revealed how attackers are routinely bypassing updated layers of network and endpoint security products to execute their malicious activities. Now, more than ever, preparing for such threats must include containing the damage and being able to rapidly restore systems to trusted states.

INFORMATION IS AMMUNITION

In order to achieve this, organisations need to look into adopting a threat-centric approach to security. Attackers do not discriminate and will take advantage of any gap in the protection layers to reach their end-goal. Instead of relying on unrelated 'silver bullet' technologies that do not and cannot work together, businesses need solutions that are able to address the extended network infrastructure that is in place. This means going beyond the basics and being able to protect endpoints, mobile platforms, and virtual environments as well.

Attackers now have many advantages as extended networks make it fundamentally harder to map, patch or manage threats. Therefore, companies must share intelligence in a continuous manner as they will then be able to address the attack continuum, which consist of potential situations that can occur before, during,

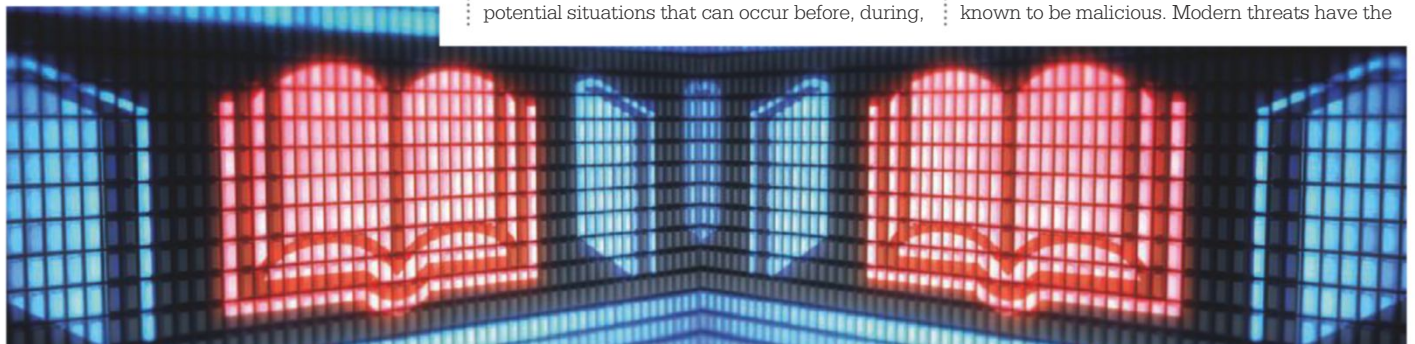
and after a potentially dangerous situation. It is crucial to look for technologies that go beyond point-in-time detection and pro-active blocking. This includes having the continuous capability to constantly watch and never forget, which ensures that organisations are able to mitigate damage quickly once an attacker gets in.

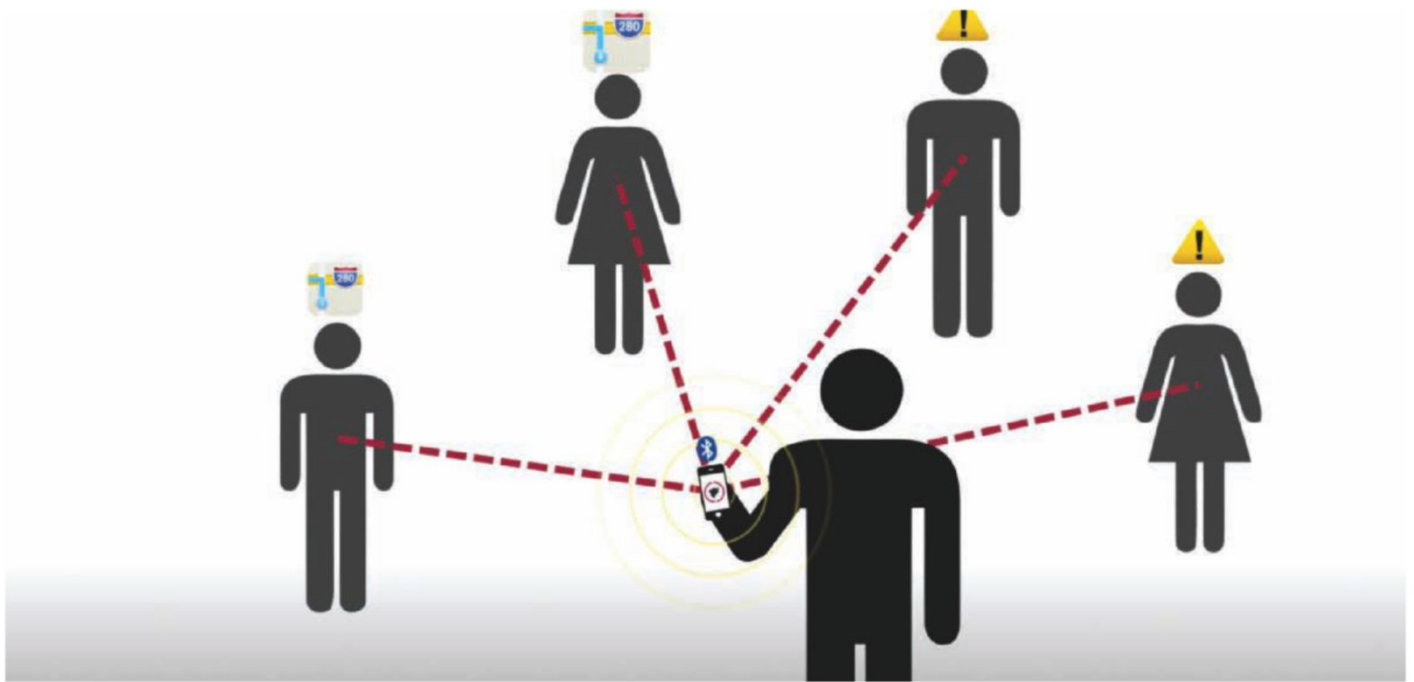
Beyond that, security processes should also be automated as much as possible as manual procedures alone are insufficient to defend against persistent attack methods. This is especially true for malicious activities with advance automated techniques that speed up and broaden threat potentials. Organisations also need to reduce labour intensive tasks and streamline security processes.

In using tools, such as intrusion-prevention systems, businesses can intelligently identify and automatically be on the lookout for relevant security issues. This mean it teams need not focus on events that aren't real threats. Additionally, by automatically enforcing and tuning security policies to keep up with the pace of an ever changing threat landscape and the evolving IT environment they will also means be able to minimise the risk of exposure to the latest risks and vulnerabilities.

BEYOND BASICS

Apart from what is already being done, it is important for organisations to start leveraging on retrospective security as the perfect threat detection platform is simply unattainable. Deploying this strategy provides businesses with the ability to quickly identify, scope, track, investigate and remediate a file that is initially deemed as "safe" or "unknown" but later is known to be malicious. Modern threats have the





ability to disguise themselves as safe, allowing them to pass through defences unnoticed, remain undetected and, at a later phase, exhibit malicious behaviour.

In fact, a recent Verizon 2013 Data Breach Investigations Report revealed that 22% of such incidents require months to contain the breach. Too often, the crucial early moments are spent figuring out what just happened as many do not have a proper incident response plan in place. As it is, the nature of extended networks means organisations need to start improvising their incident response processes.

With so many potential threats lurking about, companies should have a designated Incident Response team, even if not full time, that is trained to communicate and respond to these threats. They need to be backed by documented processes and policies so that they know in advance what they can do in a crisis.

There must also be an Incident Response Run Book, which is purposefully made with clear step-by-step instructions for the security team to follow. This gives them some added advantage when incidents occur. The book must include

notification processes and a collaboration call tree that will lead to a better, swifter and more accurate containment and remediation actions.

Having systematic programme reviews on a quarterly basis also helps as it means organisations have to make sure that suitable policies, configurations, and rules performances are in place.

OTHER AVENUES

The same Verizon report also found that methods targeted at users, such as malware, phishing and misuse of credentials, were the key vulnerabilities for many organisations.


Therefore, educating users and employees about such attempts are important so they can be made aware of these methods and will do the necessary to mitigate these issues.

This includes putting into place policies that restrict user behaviour, which can go a long way towards preventing these types of malicious attacks that mostly rely on relatively simple methods.

Businesses must also be committed to keeping their staff highly trained and

updated about the current threat landscape.

In fact, personnel should be able to compare and differentiate the type of threats that are available out there. As for security teams, ongoing professional development is necessary and must have specific focuses, such as being able to identify an incident, knowing how to classify it, and being able to contain and eliminate such problems. The training will help to keep them apprised of the latest attack techniques used, which now include advanced disguise threats, intrusive data extraction, and establishing bases for future attacks.

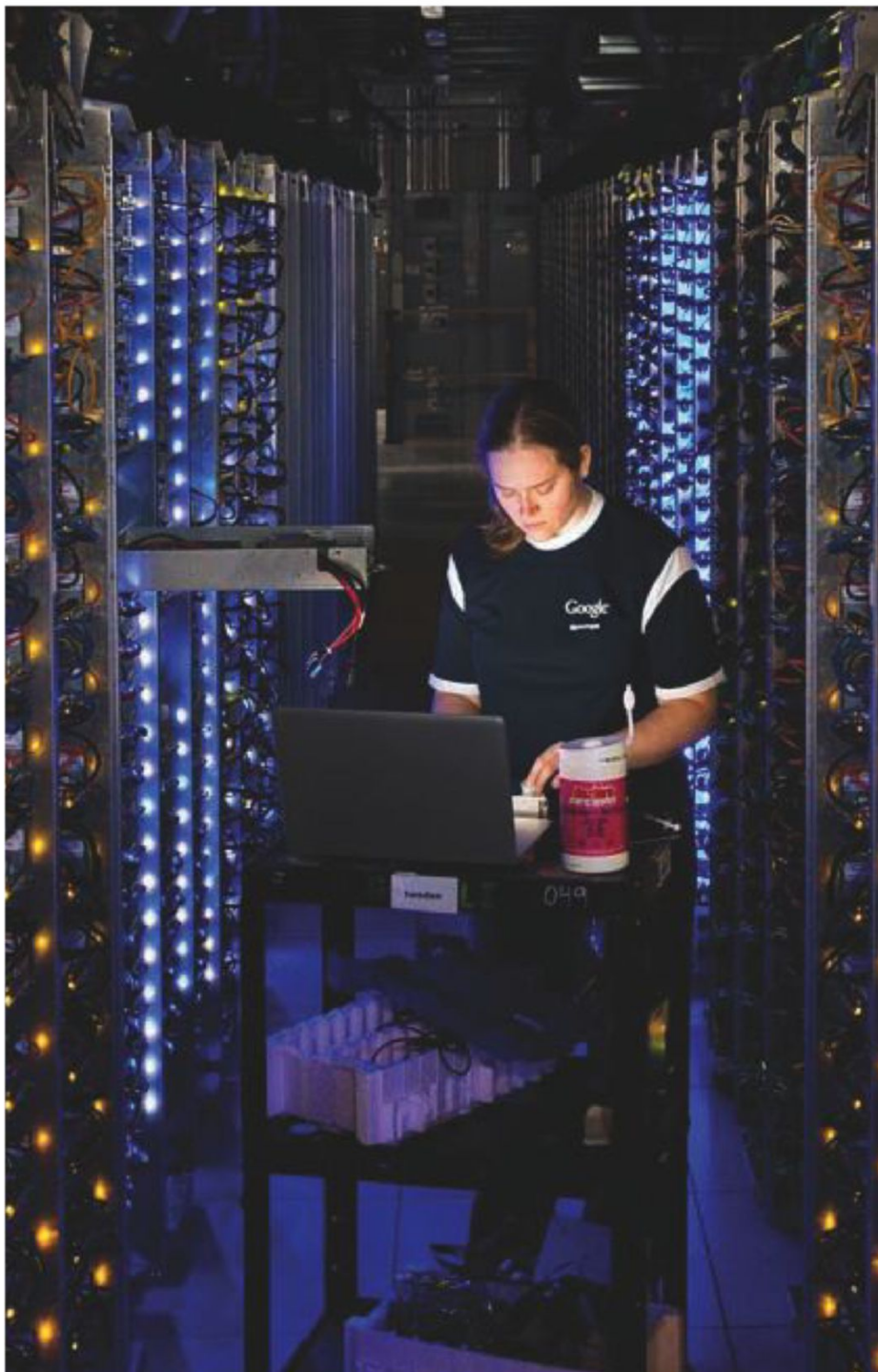
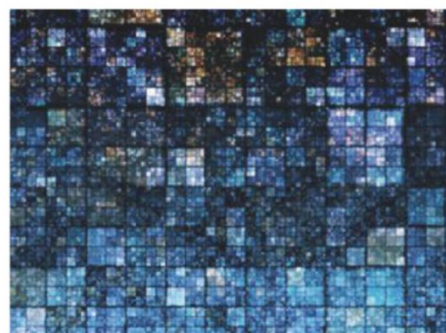
Every organisation must face the fact that breaches can occur. While it is important to continue to strengthen defences, they now have to also increase their resiliency when facing persistent attacks. The best preparations require a comprehensive approach that includes advance technologies, improved processes as well as the necessary training of people that manage these systems. In doing so, organisations can take the right action promptly when an attack does happen. 



A Little Security for Big Data



Dato' Seri George Chang, Regional Vice President for Southeast Asia & Hong Kong, Fortinet



Securing Big Data in the enterprise has transformed the data protection landscape. Beyond the basics, it now requires smart policies enforcement, thorough analytical processes, and high performance tools. Big Data, which Gartner defines as high-volume, high-velocity and/or high-variety information assets, is - essentially - massive volumes of data that need new forms of processing to enable enhanced decision making, insight discovery, and process optimisation.

Such requirements increase routine security challenges that are present in existing data networks. Big Data is extremely varied in what it encompasses as it includes web logs, RFID data, sensor networks, social network data, internet text and documents, internet search indexing, call detail records, medical records, and photography archives. This is just a glance of the sort of unstructured data that it represents.

There are four major facets that IDC took note of in terms of challenges and opportunities when it comes to Big Data:

- **Volume:** The amount of data is moving from Terabytes to Zettabytes (1 Zettabyte is 1021 bytes or 1,000,000,000 Terabytes) and beyond
- **Velocity:** The speed of data (in and out) will transform the current static one-time datasets to ongoing streaming data
- **Variety:** The range of data types and sources will expand beyond structured to include un/semi-structured or raw
- **Value:** The importance of the data based on its context

Yet, while Big Data presents new security challenges, the starting point to resolving these challenges remain the same as creating any other security strategy: by determining data confidentiality levels, identifying and classifying the most sensitive information, deciding where criticals are to be located, and establishing secure access models for both the data and analysis.

BIG DATA

PLAN AROUND BIG DATA LIFECYCLE

Properly defended Big Data necessitates are the ones that define specific security requirements around Big Data lifecycles. Typically, this begins with securing the collection of data followed by securing access point. Like most security policies, a proper assessment of the threats to the organisation's Big Data never ends as it revolves around ensuring the integrity of data at rest and during analysis.

Performance is a key consideration when securing collected data and its related networks. Firewalls and other network security devices, such as those for encryption, must be of sufficiently high performance to ensure that they can handle the increase in throughput, connections, and application traffic. In a Big Data environment, policy creation and enforcement are more critical than the norm because of the larger volumes of data and the number of people who want access to it.

The sheer amount of data also proportionately increases the need to prevent data leakage. Data Loss Prevention technologies should be employed to ensure that information is not being leaked to unauthorised parties. Internal intrusion detection and data integrity systems must be used to detect advanced targeted attacks that have bypassed traditional protection mechanisms, this includes the detection of anomalies in the collection and

aggregation layers. The inspection of packet data, flow data, sessions and transactions should all be scrutinised.


As Big Data involves information residing over a wide area from multiple sources, businesses will also need to have the ability to protect it data wherever it exists. In this regard, virtualised security appliances that provide a complete range of protective functionalities must be positioned at key locations throughout the public, private, and hybrid cloud architectures that are frequently found in Big Data environments. Even resources must be connected in a secure manner and data transported from these locations to the Big Data storage must also have advance protective layers.

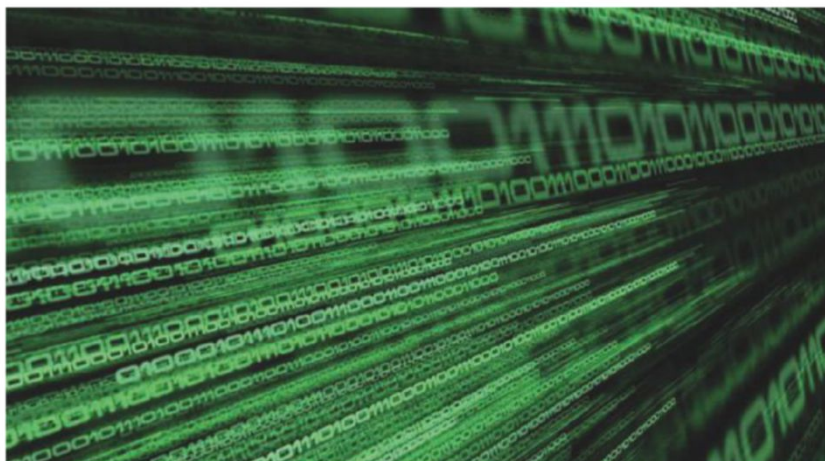
LEVERAGING BIG DATA WITH THE RIGHT SECURITY TOOLS

While Big Data present such challenges, there are also opportunities to reap. With the right tools, vast amounts of information could be analysed, allowing an organisation to better understand and benchmark normal activities. These security tools include dedicated logging, analysis, and reporting appliances that can securely aggregate log data from security and other syslog-compatible devices. Such appliances will also examine, report, and archive security events, network traffic, web content, and messaging data. In doing so, policy

compliance could then be better measured and easily customised to introduce improvements into monitoring reports.

Even with such benefits, the difficulty in capturing, managing, and processing information quickly in Big Data environments will continue to make security an afterthought in many firms. As portable storage and bandwidth continue to grow, the mobility of these larger datasets will also increase, resulting in breaches and higher possibilities of disclosure for sensitive information. Threats will likely come from intruders manipulating the business' Big Data in such a way that advance analytics and business intelligence tools could generate false results, which may lead to management decisions that could profit the intruders.

Even small changes in Big Data can have a big impact on results. As such, organisations must not ignore the need to secure Big Data assets, be it for security reasons, business intelligence or otherwise. They must address their Big Data's main needs in terms of authentication, authorisation, role-based access control, auditing, monitoring, and backup and recovery. Going forward, Big Data analytics that focus on behavioural benchmarking and monitoring will also become increasingly crucial, especially when it comes to addressing next-generation information security challenges. 





An Army Approaches

by calvin khong

Putting every effort to provide the perfect gaming notebook.

Sometimes, a great device is not the only thing that matters. One must include the user's experience with it. MSI seems to understand that and proves it with the new products it had recently released. In essence, it shows that the company is listening to its consumers. Even better for us at PC.com as Lady Luck would have it that we managed to arrange a proper sitdown interview with Jerry Lu, Country Manager of MSI. He tells us as it is and is game to share what MSI has in store for the market.

PC.com: Why the focus on gaming notebooks?

Jerry Lu: When we released our first gaming notebook in 2008, the market was not ready for it. People felt there was no need for high performance notebook as they prefer using a desktop. However, thanks to the advancement of technology, the CPU and GPU for notebooks are finally able to match desktop hardware. As the power and performance differences become more evident, people's perception of mobility have changed as well. In fact, nowadays, even game competitions use gaming notebooks as they are easier to carry around compared to moving a whole desktop, monitor and the necessary peripherals. In our case, MSI took it to the next level as we enhanced (the concept of) mobility whereby we incorporated our Killer LAN technology and have decided to use a Super RAID system, which offers 1,500Mbps read/write speeds, instead of using SSD. Paired with the latest CPU and GPU tech, our gaming notebooks are able to process gaming graphics at almost real time. This ensures a more precise gaming experience. These are the reasons why we put a lot of efforts on our gaming notebooks.

PC.com: How would these gaming notebooks affect your MPower motherboard line?

Lu: With MPower, users have more freedom to build their own gaming rig as it allows them to set their own RAM module ratings and so on. Those who prefer to have everything done for them can just head over to our MSI gaming notebooks. Think of MPower as the line where users are able to customise their whole experience. This is very much unlike stock Intel motherboards that cannot be overclocked. Of course, one must not overlook the fact that MSI is one of the first to launch a gaming notebook with a 4th Generation Intel processor inside and thus it also offers the same competitive (and customisable) advantage.

PC.com: Where did you get the inspiration to make these gaming notebooks?

Lu: We have sponsored teams who played in gaming tournaments for quite some time. Thanks to the feedback from these professional gamers, we managed to take those inputs and turn it into great gaming notebook concepts. The release of these notebooks can be seen as MSI replicating the pro-gamers' experiences. So it's no surprise that the brand would imitate gaming behaviours.

PC.com : How does MSI supports itself within this declining notebook industry?

Lu: Well, according to Gartner, we are number one in gross profits for Malaysia during Q1 of this year. The reason for us keeping this great momentum is more than just offering good features. Seeing that our focus is on gaming notebooks, (we are capitalising on the fact that) it is a niche market and, for us, it is working well. Look at the smartphone and tablet market. With the hype about smartphones dying off, consumers would now purchase a new device once every two to three years. So, no matter what products are being released, these consumers will not switch over immediately. Even for notebooks. As long as a notebook is usable, people don't find it necessary to get a new one. It works differently for gaming notebooks. With the release of a new game title, the graphics requirements as well as the demand for power will increase.

Old notebooks cannot keep up with this trend, which means users need to constantly upgrade their systems as high performance is critical for an immersive experience.

PC.com : Two to three years ago, MSI included 3D screens on its notebooks. Will your latest notebook models come with a 3D variant?

Lu: No. Honestly, 3D features are not a good selling point. When the 3D function is turned on, it reduces a computer's performances. Imagine playing heavy duty games with 3D capabilities; choppy performance is most definite and the overall frame-rates will drop. We have a replacement for that...3K resolution. This means our notebook screens will be able to show more resolution than Full HD. You will be seeing this at the end of Q3 2013.



PC.com : Is there a reason why MSI partnered up with SteelSeries?

Lu: Tying up with SteelSeries adds another good selling point for our notebooks. Also, it is a good business model for MSI and SteelSeries. In fact, within the gaming industry this company has always been a market leader. With our collaboration, we also leverage on each other's innovations and business practices. It helps that gamers recognise this brand. Imagine seeing a top gaming notebook and a top gaming keyboard put together into one device. It would definitely create a great impression.

PC.com : Do you have any other partnerships with different manufacturers?

Lu: So far, we have no partnerships with other gaming accessories. We will stick with SteelSeries for now and, as such, will not be out looking for any others just yet. In the gamers' eyes, SteelSeries is like Louis Vuitton bags for girls. This brand is also very famous in Europe, Australia and in Asia. We're really glad that real gamers can appreciate the quality and user experience that SteelSeries offers and by extension they will enjoy the quality performance MSI offers as well.

PC.com : MSI released Android tablets before. Will Malaysia be seeing it anytime soon?

Lu: From Q3 to Q4 of this year, we will be launching our Android tablets in the form of 7in to 10in sizes. There will be six models coming in. Further down the pipeline, the 3G version of these tablets will also be available right after that. We'll

also be introducing an 11.6in Windows tablet at a later date.

PC.com : Notebook manufacturers have entered into the smartphone market. Is MSI looking into that as well?

Lu: We will not enter into the smartphone market. Look at Nokia and HTC. Those are phone manufacturers and you don't see them jumping into the notebook market. The experience of using a smartphone is completely different from using a notebook. Normally, you make calls with a phone and carry it around every day. People don't do that with notebooks or maybe only a small fraction of people will. If we are interested, we will not simply enter the market just to show our presence. There needs to be a unique experience being offered like what we have for our notebooks. Users can take heart that MSI gaming notebooks are not regular computers as they are purposefully crafted for gaming.

PC.com : Is there anything else you would like our readers to know?

Lu: There will be more marketing activities for the Malaysian market. We will be holding a gamer gallery where we invite gamers to experience MSI products. Additionally, we will also recommend them to bring their own rigs and share their user experience with us. It is not just a showcase of our products since the public can also share their knowledge about gaming hardware and discuss about their passion for game. We will also be organising roadshows for people to try out our product. For us, the user experience is the most important factor when consumers want to purchase a gaming rig. **PC**



The Passionate Voice

Asakawa Yuu's take on her zest for life and strong vocation for voice acting



Famous among anime fans for her role as Megurine Luka from the Vocaloid game and music series and Fate/Stay Night's Rider, Asakawa Yuu is all game to be out and about meeting fans. PC.com managed to catch her for a quick interview and find out, firsthand, about her experience in working within the anime industry, her out-going nature, and how she hopes to work as a voice actress for the anime business until she is well past her prime.

While she prefers to be valued by her voice work and not her role as an idol, she is very knowledgeable about the anime industry and would want to work for One Piece if possible. That may be a possibility but we'll never find out!

PC.com: As this is your first time in Malaysia, how has it been so far?

Asakawa Yuu: I just arrived the day before and have checked out the night life and restaurants in the short time I had. I am sure I will be having a lot of fun here, especially here at the event (Culture Japan Con, CJC) and I have plans to go sightseeing after the event is done as well.

Q: How did you feel when Danny Choo (Host of CJC (Host of)) invited you over to Malaysia?

Asakawa: I'm so glad that Danny called me over to this event even though I am not as active I used to be within the anime industry in recent years. I don't believe that I am too famous, so to be invited here as a Guest, I'm very shocked and happy. It makes me wonder if it is okay for me to be here since I am not that famous.

Q: But you have performed in many notable roles in very popular anime titles, like Sakaki from Azumanga Daioh, Rider from Fate/Stay Night and Jura from Vandread. Among all of them, which is your favourite role?

Asakawa: Now that's a hard question! I can't really decide on who is my favourite. Definitely Rider from Fate/Stay Night, as she is one of my top favourite characters. There is also Megurine Luka from Vocaloid, which I provided my voice for. She made me very famous.

Q: How do you prepare yourself for these varied roles?

Asakawa: And this is even harder to answer! (Laughs!) The most important thing is to imagine how I can act as the character. For example, Sakaki (Azumanga Daioh) is a quiet character and doesn't speak much whereas I am the total opposite as I love to speak. As such, I have to imagine, at first, what would Sakaki think or do in certain situations and work from there. Once I



Asakawa



have an idea, it'll only get bigger and bigger until - finally - Sakaki is born. The same goes for any voice/character role I am assigned to.

Q: One of your first roles when you debuted as a voice actress was Priss Asagiri, from Bubblegum Crisis 2040. How did it all start for you?

Asakawa: I don't really remember how it all began for me. I was doing auditions like most voice talents would and I recall being introduced to a famous anime director, which was when I had been informed that my voice is suitable for a particular character. Before I knew it, I got the role. This happens sometimes in the voice acting industry. As for my role as Priss... I forgot how I became her voice. I did an audition I think and I won that role, which, to me, was big deal since I was a new-comer at the time.

Q: What is the most challenging role you have encountered?

Asakawa: The hardest for me was taking the role of Rider, my favourite by the way, and changing her character for a comedy-like Fate/Stay Night spin-off, which was called Carnival Phantasm. Originally Rider is a slow-speaking character with soft vocals but in this particular anime, Rider became sort of a parody for herself as she speaks hyper-fast and acts cute. Totally different from what I did before.

Q: Who is the voice actor you admire the most?

Asakawa: I have a lot of seniors that I look up to. The one I look up to the most is Nozowa Masako, the voice behind Son Goku from the Dragon Ball anime. She is such a famous person and has taken so many roles as her own. I respect her a lot for what she has done for the anime and voice acting industries.

Q: You're known for providing a voice in many famous anime. Which is your favourite?

Asakawa: To be honest, I don't have many favourites as I don't really watch much anime. I don't actively avoid it but more of the fact that since I worked in the anime industry, it feels like work if I do watch or follow any show. In fact, if I watch an anime I auditioned for and did not get the role, I'd start commenting on whoever got that role and compare myself to that person. I'll more likely say that I can do better than that person and be somewhat bitter about it (laughs!). If you ask me, I'd prefer watching American TV drama instead.

Q: You've mentioned in previous interviews that you're a big fan of the Resident Evil series. If given the chance, which character would you voice in that game?

Asakawa: I personally love Leon... he's my favourite character! (Laughs!) As for who I would voice... definitely Ada Wong, even though she is my rival for Leon's heart!

Q: While we're on the same topic, you've seen Leon S. Kennedy grow as a character, from his rookie cop days to becoming a top secret agent. Which did you like more?

Asakawa: My personal favourite is when Leon appeared in Resident Evil 4. He looked cute then in his leather jacket. The fourth game is also my favourite even though Resident Evil 2 and 3 have equally as interesting storylines.

Q: You happen to tweet in English frequently. How is it going so far?

Asakawa: It's pretty difficult to be honest. (Laughs!) I made a mistake last night and one fan corrected me on that. It is always nice when I am given advice on how to improve my command of English.

Q: Let's focus on another social media effort that you've worked on. Tell us a bit about your Youtube show.

Asakawa: It's on hold for now, since season three. It's pretty fun to produce but the hiatus is indefinite until I find some new sources of inspiration and funding. I'd love to continue the show if I can.

Q: You've been to America a few times. How are the fans there like?

Asakawa: They are very different. Asian fans are quiet, shy and take time to approach me. I'd like to think they are brought up to be polite. The Americans are the exact opposite where they're loud and easy going. They'd come up to me and go "Hey you!" or "Let's go out for lunch with the guys!" I'd want to meet more fans and engaged them actively as well, even if I am not allowed to be so open.


Q: What do you think of Megurine Luka when you got the role?

Asakawa: It's different for me when I voiced Luka. It was more providing my voice and not acting like Luka. In essence, I only give my voice to her and not really be her like my previous roles.

Q: Since you speak English somewhat fluently, would you consider doing any voice work in English?

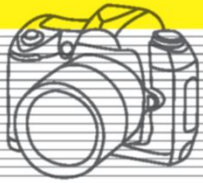
Asakawa: I would! In fact I'd like to try some voicing work for American dub anime. If I can even perform in English, I'd jump at the job for sure.

Q: Do share some words for your Malaysian fans.

Asakawa: Thank you for all your support and love! I'm happy to be here in Malaysia and would love to spend more time here if I can. I'd love to come back here for sure and, once I become even more famous, perhaps even visit Malaysia every year for CJC and, who knows, maybe other major anime events as well. We'll see! (Laughs!) 



Asakawa sharing the stage with Choo at Culture Japan



PIXELS

**PICTURE
OF THE
MONTH**



Picture of The Month

Camera: Samsung NX2000

Focal Length: 35mm

ISO: 100

Exposure time: 1/125 seconds

F-stop: f/4.5



ASIA TOUR
2013
MALAYSIA XI 0 CHELSEA 3
1 HALF
45:00

138

A Night with
Chelsea



PIXELS

Camera: Canon EOS 7D
Focal Length: 200mm
ISO: 1600
Exposure time: 1/250 seconds
F-stop: f/2.8

A Night with Chelsea

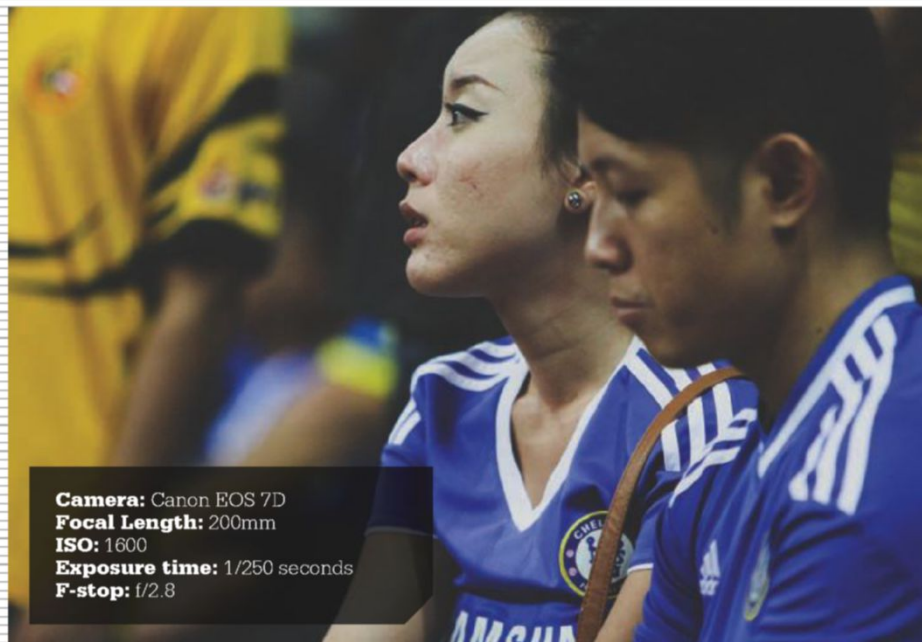
by victor yap and daryl tan,
pictures by uncle amy and
hafidz rabonn

Shah Alam Stadium flooded in a sea of blue

It's that time of the year again when BPL football teams travel to Asia for their pre-season tours. Just like last year, Chelsea FC chose Malaysia as one of its stops, attracting huge crowds of fans - both local and foreign - to storm the Shah Alam Stadium and experience a proper live BPL match. Of course, that would be true if the Chelsea FC is going up against a familiar rival from England. However, the spunky lads of the Malaysian IX played their very best, giving the crowd a great game of footie for the year on Malaysian soil.

The personal experience is always a grandiose thing for fans. From the messily parked cars along the road leading to the stadium, the equally as messy traffic control, which consist of police, Shah Alam City Council personnel, and RELA members, and the crowded arena where a lot of makeshift stores were selling Chelsea memorabilia, all of them added to the perfect prelude to what is to come that evening.

Once in the stadium, the fun fair atmosphere changed as it became highly charged with excitement, tense apprehension, and general rowdiness of football fans. Stepping beyond the threshold of the entrance into the seating area is like being literally transported into another world. As expected of Malaysians, the stadium slowly



Camera: Canon EOS 7D
Focal Length: 200mm
ISO: 1600
Exposure time: 1/250 seconds
F-stop: f/2.8

filled up as time trickled away to the kick-off. Come the last 10 minutes towards that magical moment, the entire Shah Alam Stadium became a sea of blue. The turnout of Chelsea fans were far greater than the last time the Blues graced these shores.

In fact, the game was more fast-paced and entertaining than the previous face-off between

Chelsea and Malaysian IX. The slick passing that the English team is renowned for forced the home team to resort to long passes and for strike strategies to stem the Blues oncoming tidal wave. Excitement cropped up throughout the game with an injury scare right after the brilliant goal from up and coming youngster, Kevin de Bruyne, and massive player changes for

Camera: Canon EOS 7D
Focal Length: 200mm
ISO: 500
Exposure time: 1/200 seconds
F-stop: f/2.8



the second half. Malaysia's only goal that night was spectacular as well, making the home crowd delirious with glee as the entire stadium shook with joy.

THE SHOTS

This does not refer to the goal attempts being taken during the game but more of how one can take great pictures at such an exciting football

match. There is already ample lighting at the stadium, so a flash is not required. Using it would burn out the picture or create unwanted weird lighting effects.

What any budding photographer would need is a Digital SLR that comes equipped with the following lenses: prime, telescopic, and wide-angle. Steady hands are necessary too as there will be frequent lens switching. However, it is



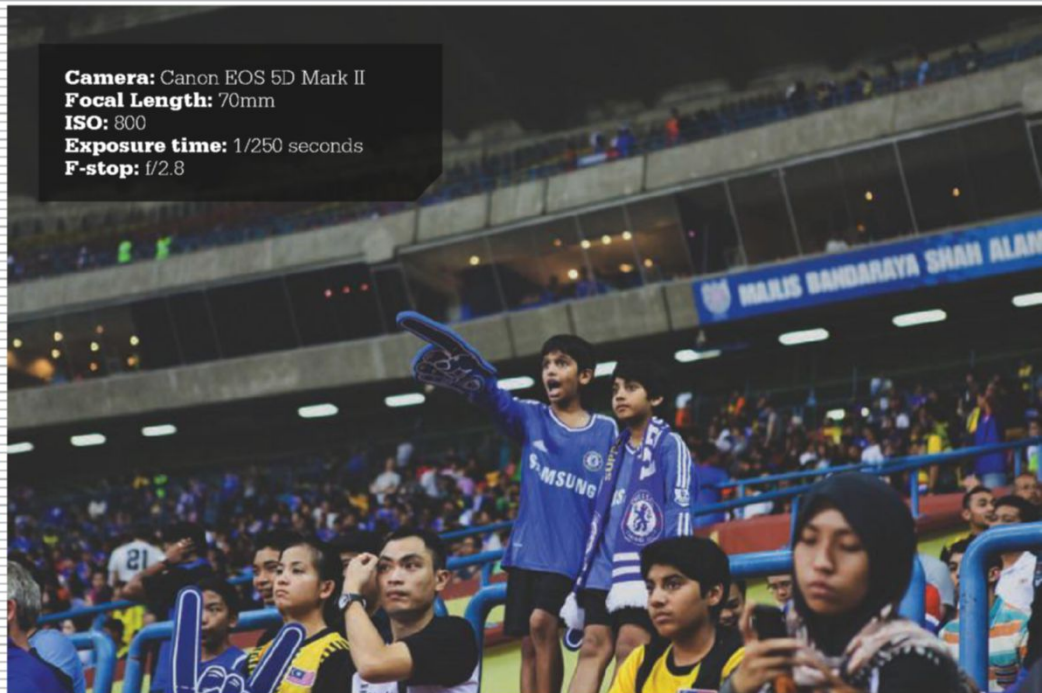
Camera: Canon EOS 5D Mark II
Focal Length: 70mm
ISO: 800
Exposure time: 1/400 seconds
F-stop: f/2.8



PIXELS



Camera: Canon EOS 5D Mark II
Focal Length: 200mm
ISO: 800
Exposure time: 1/400 seconds
F-stop: f/4



Camera: Canon EOS 5D Mark II
Focal Length: 70mm
ISO: 800
Exposure time: 1/250 seconds
F-stop: f/2.8



Camera: Canon EOS 7D
Focal Length: 200mm
ISO: 500
Exposure time: 1/250 seconds
F-stop: f/2.8



better to always go with one primary lens in mind and switch around as and when necessary.


As for camera settings, keep in mind of the following:

- Set the ISO rating between 200 and 400. Anything beyond would produce a high level of noise. This applies to almost all DSLR bodies
- Use a high shutter speed to capture those glorious goal attempt moments
- Always keep the aperture settings wide and

shallow so there will always be enough light captured in a shot

- Make sure the camera is set to spot metering and burst mode. Single shots can work too but is only recommended for advanced users

The end result: pictures that would have pin sharp foreground and blurred backgrounds that may have some form of 'bokeh' effect.

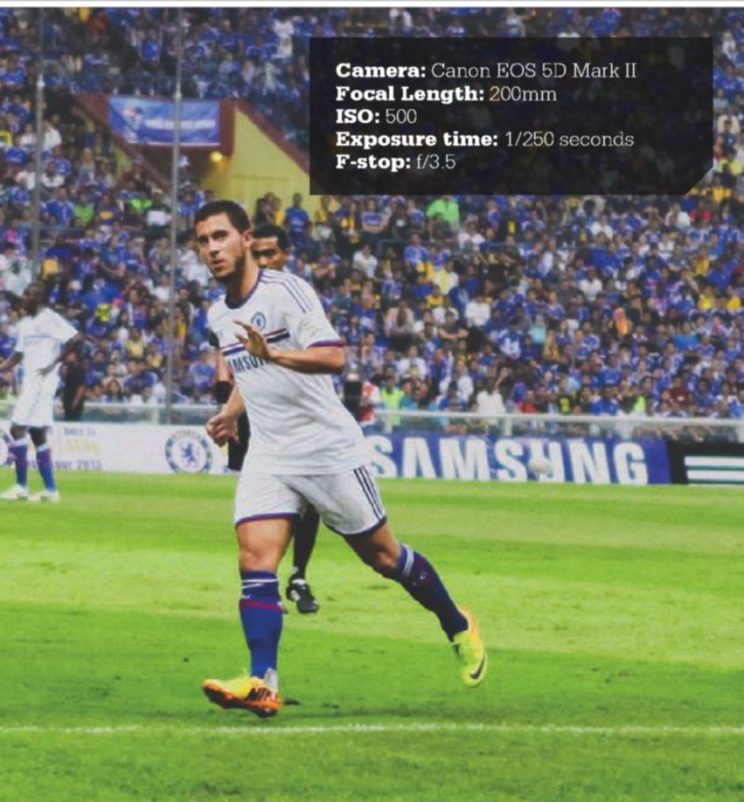
Lastly, always keep an eye out for that perfect moment and take the shot. 



Camera: Canon EOS 5D Mark II
Focal Length: 70mm
ISO: 500
Exposure time: 1/400 seconds
F-stop: f/4



Camera: Canon EOS 5D Mark II
Focal Length: 200mm
ISO: 500
Exposure time: 1/250 seconds
F-stop: f/3.5



Camera: Canon EOS 5D Mark II
Focal Length: 200mm
ISO: 500
Exposure time: 1/250 seconds
F-stop: f/3.5



Camera: Canon EOS 5D Mark II
Focal Length: 70mm
ISO: 500
Exposure time: 1/250 seconds
F-stop: f/3.5





| TECH 101



Four Useful Tricks for Video Marketing on YouTube

What you need to know when it comes to video

by Sajith Sivanandan, Country Head, Google Malaysia

Big tip: If you're not using the video site to market your company, you're missing a huge opportunity.

Not marketing on YouTube yet? You probably should be. It is the place to be on if you want your videos to go viral fast!

Here are a few usage stats that may convince you:

Google-owned video website now attracts more than 800 million unique users per month globally

and accounts for more than 3 billion hours of video watched on YouTube per month. Mobile now makes up more than 25% of YouTube's total watch time.

Bottom line: If you're in business and trying to connect with your audience, you can't afford to ignore YouTube as a digital marketing channel.

With YouTube, a digital campaign can be crafted around a video-based interactive concept. All you need is time, some great videos and little know how for video editing and effects.

So how can you approach your efforts on YouTube? Here are a few tips to keep in mind when planning and measuring your campaigns:

1. Know Your Audience

One of the biggest myths about YouTube is that you have to have a funny viral hit in order to be successful. This isn't necessarily the case. If you know your audience, experiment with content your customers can relate to; if you don't know your audience well, these content experiments can help reveal useful audience information.

Here's the key: You don't need to connect with the whole YouTube user base. Just focus on engaging with the right audience. AstroTutorTV, for example, gives live tutorials to secondary school students via their dedicated channel on YouTube. This means that they didn't need to create a video that had mass appeal. They needed a video with personal appeal to students who are interested in learning and preparing for the SPM

2. Use How-To Video

On YouTube, searchers look for the term "how to" three times more than they do "music video." By generating how-to video content, not only are you sharing your unique expertise with your audience and potential customers, but you're also laying the foundation for the kind of loyalty and relationship building that can lead to real business gains.

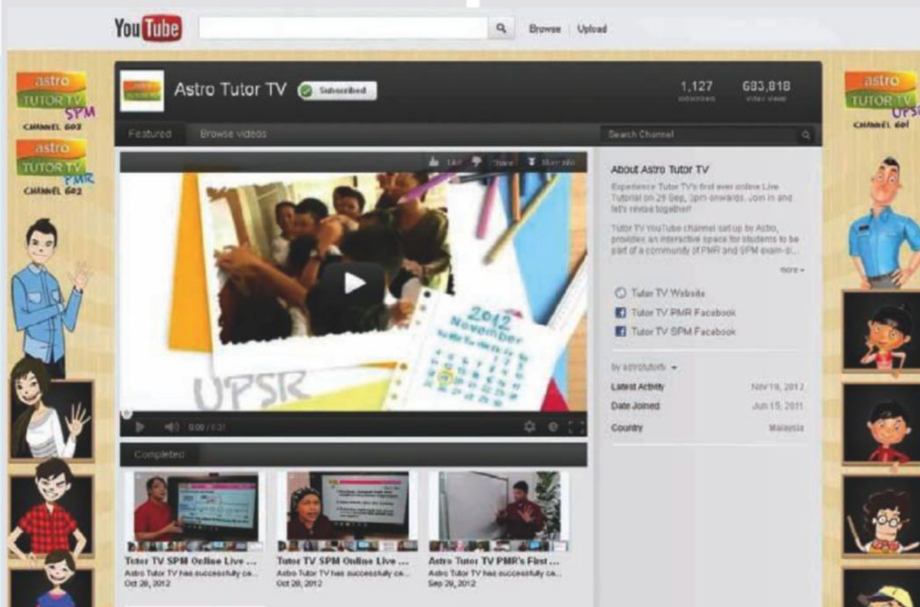
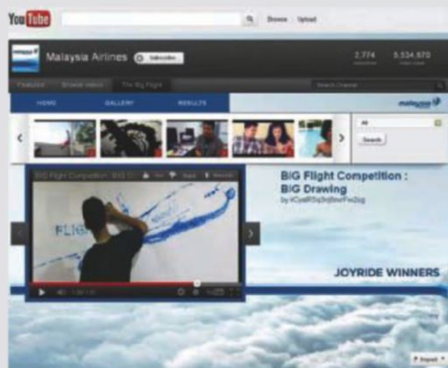
Take a look at the videos posted by BBOGuys.com, an online retailer for grills, in their YouTube channel. They have how-to videos for using and shopping for grills, as well as recipes.

3. Target the Local Market

While YouTube has a global reach, many businesses also use ad-campaigns to reach specific audiences or geographic areas. YouTube offers four types of pay-per-performance "TrueView" ad options to promote your videos, helping you target ads to the audiences and regions that you care about to make the most impact.

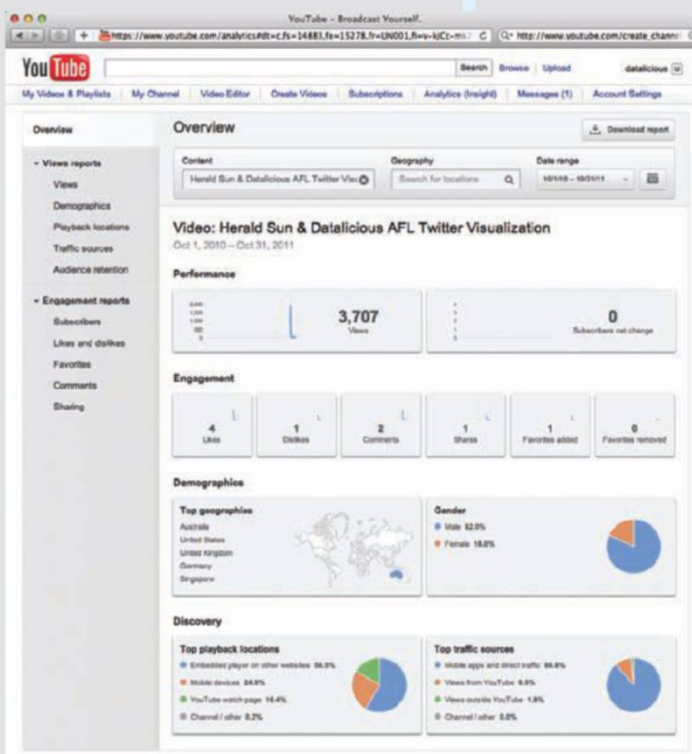
For example: To promote its new fleet of Airbus A380, Malaysia Airlines launched 'The Big Flight' on its official YouTube channel. Local YouTubers were encouraged to submit interesting videos to earn them the lifetime opportunity for a unique 'joyride' on board the A380.

This competition appeared to be focusing its marketing initiatives on geographic targets closest to its location. That makes its campaign efficient and more likely to convert viewers into customers.



4. Review Your Analytics

As always, you need to be able to understand how your efforts are paying off. YouTube Analytics measures data, such as views, audience retention, subscribers, viewer sources and demographics, call-to-action clicks, and mobile access. Just as it helps to analyse your Google Analytics, knowing what works on YouTube (or doesn't) can help you be a better marketer. Here are a few things to keep an eye on:




What keeps people watching: Learn what kind of content are the most interesting to your audience and where their interest drops off. Look for correlations like viewer retention compared to overall views, and see how your videos compare to other videos of similar length.

How people find your videos: See which sites and other sources are driving traffic to your videos, playlists or channel in YouTube's traffic sources report, and dive into the data on a per-video level. This can help you better invest resources in the campaigns or channels that are driving the most people to your content.

Why people subscribe to your channel:

Building your subscriber base is crucial to developing a loyal following, so dive into the subscription report in YouTube Analytics to see what videos drive the most subscribers. Examine the dates or videos where there was a high gain or loss of subscribers: What did you do differently on those occasions? Identify key content trends that drive up your subscriptions and then apply those success strategies elsewhere.

Understanding what works in YouTube means you can attract more viewers; more viewers means an increased likelihood that your video will be shared—which, in turn, builds your reach and audience. No wonder you'll be smiling. 

Exposure Value

For situations where unrealistic looking pictures are snapped despite having great low light capabilities, there is always the need to adjust the exposure values. What you need to do is to tweak the exposure levels until it brings out a better contrast between the light and dark areas.

Exposure 0



Exposure -1



ISO

Everyone knows ISO. With it, you can force the exposure to stay at a certain ISO rating, which means you are able to choose between wanting better noise control or a brighter picture.

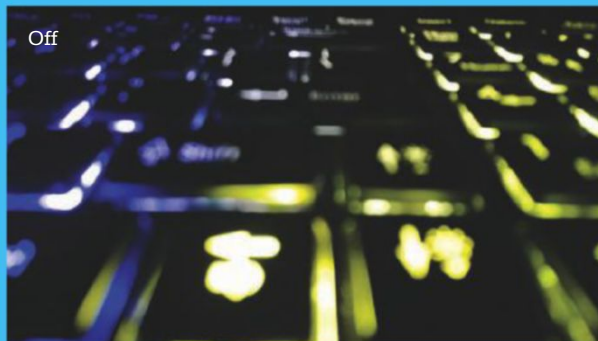


ISO 100

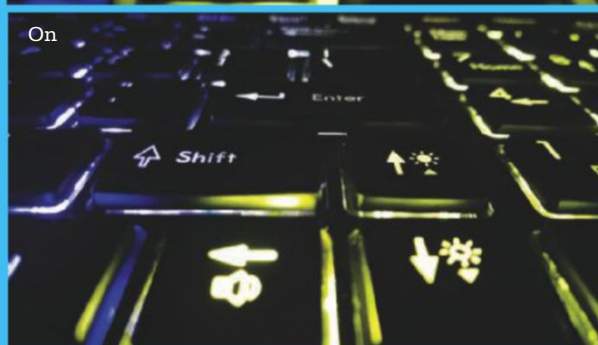


ISO 800

Off



On



Focus Light Assist

Lastly, there is also the Focus Light Assist feature. When the conditions are too dark for Nokia Lumia 925 to focus, the flash will fire up for a short while to allow the camera to focus and let you snap that perfectly composed shot.

These are the night time photos that you want to share. Nokia Lumia 925 lets you see beyond the darkness.

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It Has Begun

by victor yap

Many expected Sony to make its final push for the PlayStation 4 (PS4) at the upcoming Tokyo Game Show 2013 (TGS2013) as it is the final gaming event before the close of the year. The recent Games Convention (GamesCom2013) in Germany had the makings of being the platform to preview the upcoming next-gen console, which had been the strategy Microsoft used for its Xbox One and its launch titles. Instead, Sony made GamesCom2013 its swan song by introducing not just confirming and showcasing its 33 launch titles but also the launch dates for the US and European markets.

Come November 15 2013, the PS4 will be storming Stateside and will make a showing



in Europe on November 29 2013. It will be priced at US\$399. More details can be read on our coverage in Wire (Pg. 52). Malaysians can only hope it will show up on local shores soon enough. Insiders in the local Sony office believe the PS4 will go on sale in Malaysia in Q1 of 2014 but here's to hoping it'd be out earlier.

As a prelude to the coming deluge of news about the next-gen consoles, its launch titles, and everything in between, PC.com has rolled out its usual list of big reviews for September, such as the newly released Dragon's Crown, the biggest and most expensive game VanillaWare has ever developed, the overly packed PayDay 2 - with an even more insane

storyline and subplots, and indie developed Shadowrun Returns. If that's not enough, we're also revisiting the world of Tales of Xillia as the International Version had been released and we just couldn't resist checking out the American dub and refreshing our tenacity with the battle system.

We'll also be providing live coverage for TGS2013 and its related press conferences come mid-September, so look out for that! Big game previews and sneak-peeks are to be had and we'll even try to reach out to some of the bigwigs there as well so you don't want to miss next month's GameTime for sure!

Till then, keep the consoles warm and those joysticks hot! **PC**



gamescom

Adventure Awaits!

Dragon's Crown by edward mass

A known for developing games with 2D graphics, announced their first HD game for Sony's PlayStation 3 (PS3) and PlayStation Vita (PS Vita). The name of the game: Dragon's Crown.

George Kamitani, the Director and Founder of Vanillaware, claimed that this game is the most expensive game ever developed by his studio. In fact, it was the project that he has planned for 13 years. The game also stake its claim as the evolution of fantasy beat'em up videogames, such as Golden Axe or the Dungeon and Dragons.

After two years of development and changing publishers from UTV Ignition Games to Atlus, Dragon's Crown finally saw the light of day when it appeared on August 6 2013. To maximise the brand,

the international version is set to appear for both the Playstation 3 (PS3) and Playstation Vita (PS Vita) consoles. I only bought the PS Vita version because it seemed unique to play it on a mobile console. After hacking and slashing monsters for several days, I can say that this game is money well spent. I would've bought the PS3 version as well if I hadn't spent my money on the Steam Summer Sale.

Create Your Hero

Dragon's Crown starts off in an inn where you get to select one of the six available characters: Fighter, Amazon, Dwarf, Elf, Wizard, and Sorceress. Each character has their own strengths and weaknesses, though it really depends on the player's strategy, fighting style, and weapon preferences.

The most unique feature about this game is the various amount of character editing options that is offered. It's possible to modify the character name's font size and position, making your character stand out among the crowd. There are also messages that you can create to greet other players or leave a death quote when you're killed in the game.

Exploring Hydeland

The gameplay is similar to old classic beat'em up games with table-top RPG elements. A game-master will narrate the story and will always keep the player updated by sharing on the next objective and explaining the particular dungeon's history/origins.





such as the Inn to manage your character and allies, the Adventurers Guild to take quests and upgrade your character's skills, and the Item Shop where you buy items and repair your equipment. You can also attack the townspeople though causing too much trouble would land you in jail.

When travelling around Hydeland, there are nine dungeons that are unlocked progressively as you play through the game. Just like any beat'em up, players must defeat a group of enemies in order to advance to the next section with boss fights taking place at the end of the dungeon. Accompanying the player's exploration is Rannie, a thief who helps you unlock doors and treasure chests. Rannie can be commanded by using the Right Analog Stick on the PS3, while PS Vita users need to only tap the touchscreen to hail him.

After completing a level, the score a character collects is converted into experience points,

which is used to level up your skill set. You can also appraise and sell the treasure that Rannie collected. Usually whatever you find consists of weapons and accessories. All equipment are ranked from E (Common) to S (Super Rare) and it is only by appraising that you can determine its details and original selling price. Alternatively, if the item's value is high enough, you can choose to sell them without appraisal.

Multiplayer Madness

One notable thing about Dragon's Crown is the online multiplayer feature that is made available after the player has completed all nine dungeons. This is the same for both PS3 and PS Vita versions, though local multiplayer for the PS3 is available from the start. Vanillaware also mentioned that live cross-play between the two consoles is not available.

While it seems tedious at first, playing online is completely different than playing alone once



Publisher: Atlus
Developer: Vanillaware, Atlus
Platform: PlayStation 3, PlayStation Vita
Release Date: 6 August 2013
Genre: Action RPG
Players: 1 - 4 (PS3), 1 (PS Vita)


it's unlocked. Enemies are harder to defeat and all dungeons have an alternate route with different and stronger boss fights. You can also choose to continue on to the next dungeon with various bonus options, such as finding more gold or having higher chances of discovering rare loot from treasure chests. The final stage is also unlocked but do note that going there unprepared is suicidal.

Multiplayer gameplay is a real treat as it is very different from working with AI-controlled characters. The interactivity that you can only get with real human players is infinitely priceless. Also, since the dungeons are more difficult to clear, knowing the character's strengths and weaknesses are a must. It goes without saying that you also must be a good team player.

One important note: keep in mind that this online multiplayer mode is character specific so if you create a new character, you must complete all nine stages again to unlock this particular option.

Mysterious Adventure

As a long-time fan of beat'em up games, Dragon's Crown takes all the best elements of the genre and adds it into an action-RPG that offer endless replay value. Having stunning 2D visuals and vivid character sprites, Vanillaware has definitely played the right cards and delivered yet another great game that can rival some of the best 2013 titles that have come out thus far.

In regards to which version you'd want to get, it really depends on how you want to play Dragon's Crown. If you prefer local multiplayer, buy the PS3 version. You can also get both versions because save files can be transferred over between Sony consoles, which ensures you'd never miss a minute of gaming time with this title. 

Everyone Down!

Payday 2

by calvin khong



Thinking back, the year 2011 was fun. No one knew who am I. My heist was perfect and the cops could not catch me. All of that includes stealing jewelleries, robbing banks and more. Yes, most of the plans went very well. For two years, I have been rolling myself in stolen cash without worry and now, I want in again. The lure of money is too much. Two years ago, we call it Payday: The Heist. And right now it is Payday 2. Of course, this is all just a PC game. What do you think my job is? I am a writer not a professional crook.

Let's admit it, tapping into humans' secret desire to perform a beautifully crafted mastermind crime is a brilliant idea. Having a second crack at it with Payday 2, there were tonnes of improvements in terms of content. The developer, Overkill Software, mixes up Left 4 Dead series with the Ocean Eleven movies for

some great fun. Even better, the game brings back the original Payday crews. Mask on, guys. The crime spree begins.

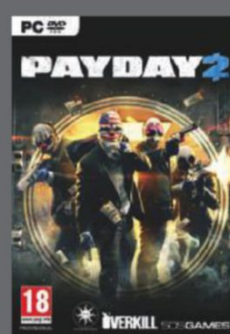
The Jobs

Let's get straight to the point. The only storyline here is to successfully clean out banks or other places in hopes that the cash earned from the many 'jobs' taken will last until retirement and then some. So who are these masked men responsible for the heists? Honestly, I don't know. They only refer to themselves as Dallas, Hoxton, Chains and Wolf.

These men picks up their missions by accessing Crime.net, a virtual map that locates and display all active online missions. Interestingly, the jobs appear and disappear in real-time. Jobs can range from a simple one-stage robbery to a few days job (from two to seven stages). And because of that, the payoffs differ too.

Jobs can range from simple store robberies, stealing drugs to hard ones like robbing an art gallery and holding the fort from the police. While some easy job only last for one stage, those with several stages can be hard. The moment I finish robbing a store (first stage), my ride home did not come on time. I am forced to defend my position (second stage) while waiting for a new ride. Then, as my ride arrive, it crashes and I have to fight the police while transferring the goods to another place (stage three). Every single mission is very interesting and I love being in the villain's shoes.





Publisher: 505 Games
Developer: OVERKILL - a Starbreeze Studio.
Platform: PC
Release Date: 13 August 2013
Genre: Action, RPG
Players: Up to four

The scenarios differ each time. No same jobs offer the same situation. The game will reshuffle the camera, guards, items and other things making the game truly random. I like this. Also, aside from earning money, the game will give a random item at the end of every operation. If I am lucky, I can finally get suppressor for my gun.

The Team

As mentioned, the original four makes a comeback and each of them has a different class. Dallas works as a Mastermind whereby he is the team medic with the ability to deal with civilians that may throw off the game. Chains, the Enforcer, is best for carrying the loots and throwing out ammos for his teammates. On the other hand, Wolf works as a Technician to drill or blow up vaults. Then, there is Hoxton, the team's Ghost, which is good for picking locks and disabling electronics.

Throughout Payday 2, I earn cash to spend and experience points to level up. By increasing my level, it will unlock new weapons and mods to use in the next job. There is also skills points to allocate to increase my proficiency in the class that I pick. Let's just say I am very satisfied with weapon selection. There are just too many for me to pick so I will always go for the effective AK-47. Weapon design is fantastic and the recoil almost reflects how a real rifle works. At least, from what I see on educational channels.

Thankfully, if I don't like the development of my class, I can always respec. However, there is one downside to this. All that hard earned illegal money spent on upgrades are burned as it is lost in the process. This is a very rigorous system that rewards those who sticks with their skills. Always remember that the best upgrades are unlocked at the highest level.

An ideal team is always a mix of all classes: Mastermind, Ghost, Enforcer and Technician. Any other combination will work but the lack of one class can offset the entire plan. Imagine a team with three Ghost and one Mastermind. Where is the Technician whose specialty is opening the safe immediately? We all want a smooth heist with no hitch.

The Plan

Speaking of plan, everything seems fair and easy, right? Wrong, and very wrong. Everyone has this in their mind: pulling the perfect crime like Ocean Eleven. Their plans have backup and their backup have backup. Oh, wait. I did mention the Left for Dead part earlier. Therefore this is no Ocean Eleven.

Being truly dependant on co-op, I cannot just barge in and start filling my bags with piles of cash. Essentially, I can but then the whole operation will be a lot more complicated. Police will arrive immediately at the scene and I may be captured. Planning beforehand with your friends is essential. Someone or maybe my friends and I may need to enter the premises before starting the job to monitor for cameras, security guards and maybe locked doors.

Once all that is done, we can put our mask on to start the act. Even then, mistakes or unforeseen events can happen. Let's say one of the staffs alert the police through a button underneath her desk. Or a civilian managed to run away during the mess. Worst, they heard gunfire or found a dead body. The possibilities of being discovered are endless and we may need to come up with a contingency plan on the spot. Then, gunfights everywhere while trying to accomplish the objective. My suggestion is to get a headset

with microphone. Talking to your friends is more efficient than typing.

The AI

The enemy AI are smarter and more alert in Payday 2. Worst still is when the police starts coming in. Initially, there will be the usual cops. Later, they come in with better weapons and armour. Here's the most frustrating part: if I am playing without my friends, there is a 90% chance the operation will fail. Completely opposite from the enemy AI, my friendly AI is dumber than a still tree. They rather take damage than hide. If my drill overheats, I have to restart it. Everything falls on me.

The Pay-out

If there is a need to buy the game, please convince two or three other friends to get it as well. I really mean it. With three AI in the team, everything never goes according to plan. However, by adding friends into the equation, the game becomes deeper, more tactical with a lot more sense of accomplishment. Odds are, there will be a lot of gunfights. I admit, it can get very irritating but once the conditions are right, I am rewarded with the artiest crime ever. It is so smooth, the team from Ocean Eleven will glow green with envy.

Best part? It has to be the replayability of the game. No matter how many times I play at the same place, I cannot predict the randomness of Payday 2. Every single time, it is a breath of fresh air. That is, if the cops didn't catch me.

Well, I am off now. My friends sent me the next mission log. This has got to be our biggest heist yet. Soon, I will be living in my own island filled with the sweet smell of cash. Adios.

A Tale of Two Heroes

Tales of Xillia by edward mass



August couldn't come soon enough for one reason: the international version of *Tales of Xillia*. Developed by Namco Tales Studio (now part of Bandai Namco Studio) in 2011, this title made history by being the first *Tales* game to sell half a million copies in Japan within its first week. In July 2012, *Tales* Series producer Hideo Baba shocked the entire fandom by announcing the international version of the game a month after *Tales of Xillia 2* was announced.

Readers who have read my previous *Tales of Xillia 2* (JP) review in December 2012 would remember that I recommended this title once the international version has been released. Now that it's finally out, it is now for me to try and convince you that this exclusive RPG for the PlayStation 3 is a worthy purchase.

Two Main Characters

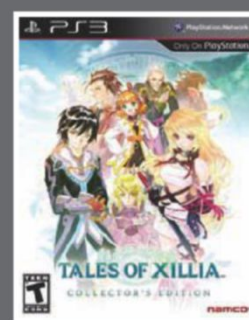
Tales of Xillia is the first mothership title to have two main characters in one story: Jude Mathis, an honour medical student, and Milla Maxwell, a young woman who has close ties to the Summoned Spirits. Set in Rieze Maxia, a realm where mankind and spirits coexist in harmony, the two heroes unknowingly discovered a powerful weapon that a neighbouring warring nation was developing. Accompanied with four companions who share the same goals, it's up to Jude and Milla to destroy the weapon before it can be used for war.

At the very start of the game, players have to choose either Jude or Milla before proceeding with the prologue proper. Both characters share the same narrative initially that will eventually start diverging into their own

respective storylines when the two protagonists are separated. It is during such moments that players are able to experience the side stories of the character they chose. Right after, the party joins up again. While it is tedious to play twice to view the entire story, the game has the New Game+ feature, which allow players to carry over items, skill levels, and other bonuses into their next game.

Dual-Raid Linear Motion Battle System

The game uses a new variant of the series' famous battle system, called "Dual-Raid Linear Motion Battle System" (DR-LMBS). When the game switches to a fight sequence, characters are given an Assault Counter (AC) to denote the number of attacks they can perform. All



Publisher: Bandai Namco Games
Developer: Namco Tales Studio
Platform: PlayStation 3
Release Date: 6 August 2013
Genre: RPG
Players: 1 - 4

attack actions consume one AC and will refill instantly when standing still or blocking. With this, players can now mix both normal attacks and Artes (special moves), with no additional restrictions, to create various kinds of combos. However, using Artes will consume the character's Technical Points (TP). This gives the game some restrictive battle limits to make it all the more challenging. TP can be replenished with TP-specific recovery items or hitting enemies with normal attacks.

"Dual-Raid" refers to the Link system, a new feature that allows two characters to coordinate their actions together while in battle. When linked with another character, the support character will either protect you from behind, initiate pincer attacks with you, or use their unique support attacks, such as Jude's Restore or Milla's Bind, to help out in the game. The downside of the Link system is having to reduce the game's multiplayer capabilities from four to two players.

The DR Link system also gives characters access to powerful tag team attacks, called Resonance Artes. These super attacks can only be used by filling up the Overlimit bar to its limit. So long as that aspect is fulfilled, a

character can use his Resonance Artes as many times as possible until the bar is depleted.

Character Growth

Rather than increasing levels to make your characters stronger, Tales of Xillia uses a new level development system called Liliun Orb. When a character levels up, a small amount of Growth Points are obtained instead of the usual stats increment. These points are then placed into a web like structure with each dot representing a character's stat, such as HP, Physical Attack or Agility. Completing one section of the Liliun Orb unlocks a rare Arte or skill, making it important to know which section is beneficial for the character in the long run.


Shop Expansion

Another new feature introduced in Tales of Xillia is the Shop Expansion system. Instead of visiting a town to buy a specific weapon or accessory, all shops in Rieze Maxia will sell the same items and equipment. To expand a shop's list of items, players have to donate raw materials that are found in dungeons and open fields. Expanding the shops' inventory means getting discounts for old items and equipment

to make them even more affordable. If you have a knack for farming raw materials, then it'll be possible to obtain stronger equipment early in the game.

An Unforgettable Tale

Despite playing the Japanese version two years ago, Tales of Xillia still gives me that awesome play experience I have come to expect. This is mostly due to the characters that are featured in the game, the extremely well written story, and the game's very fun and addictive battle system. It is a bonus for me that the English voice acting is also spot on and is almost on par with the original Japanese voice track.

Overall, the international version for Tales of Xillia is a great example of how one can take old RPG traditions and work it into the current generation of videogame wants. With the upcoming international version of the sequel being confirmed for 2014, I seriously recommend not missing this one because it'll make playing Tales of Xillia 2, which is much better in terms of story pacing and gameplay, a more enriching experience. 



Digital Table-Top Throwback

Shadowrun Returns

by magnus

The Proverbial Intro:

This job is going pretty good so far. The graveyard shift guards are, surprisingly, easier to deal with than expected. But then, the choice between a fist fight with a troll or a couple hundred Nuyen isn't too hard to make. Still, we're doing alright. I just wish that our drekkin' decker would hurry up and hack the vault systems. Bad enough he's a last minute replacement on the crew. It's bad luck to replace a man on a run.

Still, something isn't right about this whole place. It's quiet enough for a remote laboratory. But who puts these sorts of things all the way out in the slums like this? Those who have something to hide, that's who.

I draw my sidearm and take a peek out the window. There's a slight glint of a scope from an opposite building. Great, marksmen. Looks like it's time to earn my pay.



Athis review. Shadowrun is a game that lies close to the hearts of many gamers. No, not the new generation who thinks that DOTA 2 and Call of Duty are the best forms of entertainment on the planet. This is one for those who had welcomed gaming in the early days. In fact, it relies heavily on nostalgia for marketing and, to nobody's surprise, it certainly delivered on that part.

For the unfamiliar, Shadowrun is a cyberpunk role playing game with roots in old fashioned pen and paper rules. Players are cast in the role of social outcasts, having to take jobs

as they come no matter the legality. Unlike regular cyberpunk stories like the Matrix or Bladerunner, magic exists in this world and mutated humans have established new races such as dwarves, elves, orks and trolls.

Throw fireballs to cover your hacker while he tries to hack a computer mainframe? Sounds like a good idea.

Get a Crew

Like all good roleplaying games (RPGs), you have a choice of races to play. Shadowrun Returns provides the basic options that any veteran RPG gamer will recognise. The usual

tropes apply here with elves being agile, where dwarves are resilient, and orks having notoriously strong physique. Nothing too unusual there.

Character classes (called archetypes) also exist, but these serve more of a guideline for new players to build on. There's nothing against trying to be able to hack computers while lifting cars and throwing them with pin point precision. The key word is "trying".

Creating these characters is based on a point buying system. As far balance goes, it's very good and requires some experience to find a suitable combination that works. The



Publisher: Harebrained Schemes
Developer: Harebrained Schemes
Platform: Mac, PC, iPad, Android, Linux
Release Date: 25 July 2013
Genre: Strategy Role-Playing Game
Players: 1

system also allows hardcore roleplayers to build the characters they want.

In term of customising the character model, there's not much to choose from. As an indie game, this isn't too much of a loss. People who play table-top RPGs will understand that what your character looks like is the last thing anyone thinks about.

Get a Job

Shadowrun Returns is a throwback to the days of isometric RPGs. Like I said, there's a lot of nostalgia going on there. Anyone who played Baldur's Gate or Icewind Dale will be familiar with this interface. Everyone else can think of it as a less click intensive Diablo III.

The beauty of the game lies in the visuals. The world is believable without falling into the modern clichés of darker and grittier. In fact, most of the game is brightly lit (like a city should be) and has a slightly comic book feel to it. The graphics feel a little dated but they are forgiven considering the extremely small budget that the game operates with.

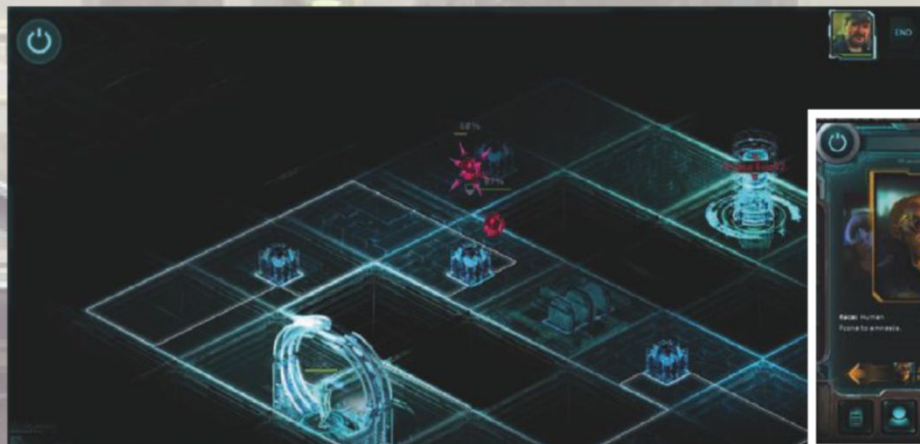
Only one thing prevents me from truly enjoying this game. That is the lack of an option to save. I mean, come on, even console RPGs have save points. It's not easy on anyone's mental health when you have to rely solely on the autosave feature. There isn't even any reason for this problem to exist. Every game should allow you to save whenever you decide you need to stop playing and get back to work.

Keep Running

Overall, the issue with saving will probably be fixed in a future patch. No developer can afford to overlook something like that. Not with a fanbase that includes table-top RPGers. We get a little fanatical at times.

The game will likely thrive once that problem is fixed thanks to the addition of tools to build your own adventures. In other words, while the initial campaign is rather short, there are plenty of fans who are already translating their homebrewed adventures into something everyone can enjoy. I did say we are a some what fanatic bunch. For those who want to get into the game, it wouldn't hurt to wait for a few patches to be released.


Otherwise, you could always pick up the actual RPG. **PC**



DIGGING UP THE DINOSAURS OF TECH BLAST FROM THE PAST



Simon Says

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